

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Socialists campaign to get out truth on INS assault in Miami

— PAGE 5

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 64/NO. 19 MAY 15, 2000

## U.S. out of Vieques

### Protest evictions! No more bombing!

We urge you to build and join the public demonstrations being organized now in many cities against Washington's imperial show of force in retaking the island of

#### EDITORIAL

Vieques, Puerto Rico.

The U.S. rulers want to assert their "right" to use the island for bombing practice in preparation for their wars of aggression around the world. The deployment of U.S. marshals and FBI cops backed up by 1,200

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## U.S. troops, cops evict protesters

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

Several thousand people filled the streets in front of Fort Buchanan in San Juan, Puerto Rico, May 4, to condemn the U.S. government and colonial authorities for the eviction of protesters from the Puerto Rican

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April 19 march of 3,000 in Washington one year after U.S. Navy bomb killed island resident David Sanes. Protests have occurred in Twin Cities, Boston, Tucson, and elsewhere against move by U.S. military and cops to evict Vieques protesters.

## Cuba's sovereignty is the issue

BY STEVE CLARK

When five-year-old Elián González was found adrift on an inner tube off Florida last November 25, "the proper procedure would have been to immediately return the child to his country of origin," Cuban president Fidel Castro told participants in a mass rally in Havana on May Day.

That, in fact, is how Washington would have proceeded had the child been from anywhere in the world but Cuba. The Im-

migration and Naturalization Service would not have set off on its own to find the parents, let alone determine their "fitness." It would not have fabricated a child custody case or pretended this was an immigration matter. U.S. officials would have put the child on the next available plane and returned him or her to the appropriate government agency in the country of origin.

That's what Washington should have done in the case of Elián González last Novem-

ber. That has been the opinion of class-conscious workers and farmers and millions of democratic-minded individuals in the United States—as well as the demand of the *Militant*—from day one. And that's what we must continue to demand that U.S. government authorities do now.

But Elián González was not from anywhere else in the world; he was from Cuba. The central issue involved is Cuban sovereignty. The U.S. government for 10 days refused even to respond "to the diplomatic note presented by the Ministry of Foreign Relations demanding the return of the child as requested by the father from the very beginning," the Cuban president said at the May Day rally. "By that time, the first public protests had taken place in Cuba, and they have continued up until today."

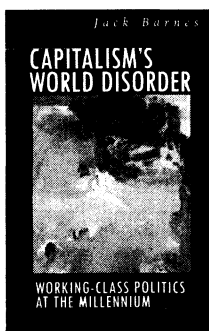
Once Washington finally responded to Cuban government officials on December 8, U.S. authorities began issuing demands completely beyond the bounds of any normal handling of such matters. The Immigration and Naturalization Service demanded to travel to Cuba on December 13 to meet with Juan Miguel González in his hometown of Cárdenas to determine his fitness as a father. What imperial arrogance! Even had there been a legitimate basis for a custody dispute—and there was none—the place to resolve it, as Castro said May 1, would have been "in a Cuban court of law." After Washington had returned the child.

When four months had passed and Elián González was still not back in Cuba, his father Juan Miguel finally decided in early April to come to the United States, having received assurances from the U.S. government that his son would be returned to his custody within one week of his arrival.

Such encroachments on Cuba's national

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Jack Barnes

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## Ecuador marches protest dollarization

BY HILDA CUZCO AND JUAN VILLAGÓMEZ

QUITO, Ecuador—In a high-spirited mobilization, some 50,000 workers, Indian peasants, and youth marched through the streets of this capital city May 1, the international working-class holiday. They protested government austerity policies that have squeezed the livelihoods of the big majority of this country's 12 million inhabitants.

Throughout the four-hour march, demonstrators loudly chanted their rejection of the government's move to replace the sucre with the U.S. dollar as the official currency of Ecuador, which is widely expected to have devastating consequences for the living standards of working people and middle classes.

They also protested a government austerity agreement with the International Monetary Fund, demanded amnesty for military officers and others facing prosecution in relation to their involvement in the January 21 popular rebellion in this country, and called for the removal of U.S. military bases from the coastal city of Manta.

The May Day demonstrations in Ecuador were marked by the confidence workers and peasants have won through the January rebellion, which, though short-lived, brought down the government of President Jamil Mahuad and took the wealthy rulers, at home and abroad, by surprise. The revolt was set off by the Mahuad regime's attempt to impose drastic austerity measures, above

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## Miners to rally May 17 to defend health fund

BY JAMES VINCENT

PITTSBURGH—Thousands of miners from coal mining communities across the United States are gearing up for a May 17 noontime rally in Washington, D.C., called by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) to defend lifetime health benefits.

The aim of the May 17 rally is to press Congress to pass legislation to shore up funding for one of the union's health funds, which provides lifetime health-care coverage to nearly 70,000 retirees and widows.

The Combined Benefit Fund (CBF) is the largest of five pension and benefit funds run by the union. Widows of miners make up a large percentage, and the average age is about 78 years. The union has issued a broad call in support of the rally. "All UMWA members—retired, laid-off, active and associate—are encouraged to attend," reports the March-April, 2000 issue of the *United Mine Workers Journal*. "You are also urged to bring along anyone else who supports preserving our pensioners' health care."

The union is fighting for passage of the "Coal Accountability and Retired

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Marchers in New York demand immigrant rights — page 2

# Marchers in N.Y. demand rights for immigrant workers

BY OLGA RODRÍGUEZ  
AND PATRICK O'NEILL

NEW YORK—Several thousand immigrant workers rallied and marched in New York City May 1 to demand the right to legal residence for all undocumented immigrants in the United States. Those present were mostly workers originally from a number of Latin American countries.

The growing size and political involvement of Mexican workers in New York was particularly noticeable in the march. Flags and other national symbols of Mexico abounded among the marchers, as they made their way down Broadway from Union Square to City Hall.

The Coalition for Dignity and Amnesty, which helped organize the action, reported similar rallies in a number of states, from Texas to California.

An estimated 6 million undocumented workers live in the United States, and the numbers continue to increase. The growing confidence of immigrant workers and readiness to stand up for their rights is one factor that led the top AFL-CIO officialdom to reconsider its previous stance of supporting certain anti-immigrant laws such as sanctions on employers hiring undocumented workers—a measure that bosses use to try to intimidate immigrants. In mid-February the AFL-CIO executive council decided to call for “amnesty”—that is, granting legal residence to all workers without papers currently living in the country. The AFL-CIO has been holding forums around the country on this subject.

## Growing confidence of immigrants

“Aquí estamos y no nos vamos!” (We’re here and we’re not leaving) and similar chants, delivered with gusto at the May 1 rally here, expressed the enthusiasm of the workers who marched to press the fight against deportations and immigration police raids, and for legal rights.

Many participants carried handwritten signs. One read, “As Mexicans, we demand

amnesty for people from all countries.” Others declared, “Being undocumented is not a crime!” and “Amnesty: we deserve it now!”

A handful of unions brought organized contingents. Among the most visible were several dozen members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE). Also participating were members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, and Local 1199 of the hospital workers union.

The Tepeyac Association, a church-linked group that organizes immigrants from Mexico, mobilized large and visible contingents to the march. Other participants included a contingent of African immigrants carrying a sign demanding amnesty.

For a time, city cops outnumbered the protesters at the assembly point. Some 2,000 cops were deployed, clad in riot gear or grouped near the march route with their motorcycles. Some wore gas masks. Police officials claimed the large cop presence was aimed at “thwarting violence,” based on supposed tips that a violent disruption might occur.

Through the course of the afternoon the police arrested 25 people, many of them anarchists, “on charges of disorderly conduct, assault, and violating an obscure 1845 state law barring masked gatherings,” as the New York *Daily News* reported. The police used the same reactionary law to initially ban a gathering of Ku Klux Klan racists last year. The immigrant rights marchers be-



Militant/Patrick O'Neill

**Demonstrators in New York May 1 carry colors of Mexican flag. “Enough!” reads sign in Spanish. Thousands of immigrant workers demanded right to legal residence.**

haved with discipline and dignity in the face of this cop mobilization.

A large number of the demonstrators were youth. Dario, an 18-year-old from Colombia who works and goes to school, explained why he was at the march. “There are those who say we don’t deserve anything but the minimum [wage] and worse because we are ‘illegal.’ But, we’re here to defend ourselves because we are all equal. We are for amnesty for *all* immigrants,” he said.

Dario pointed out that the U.S. government’s own policies in Latin America drive immigration. Contrary to Wash-

ington’s claims of abhorring what they call a “cycle of violence” in his country, he said, “U.S. military intervention in Columbia has actually increased the level of violence, and this forces many to come to the U.S. illegally.”

Local 78 of the Laborers International Union of North America was one union contingent that made itself seen. Four days earlier the union hosted a meeting of 400 workers and union representatives in Jersey City, New Jersey, to demand a new amnesty law. Many of those present were construction workers originally from Ecuador.

## South Carolina dockworkers regain union work

BY LAUREN HART

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina—After a five-month fight, members of the International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA) in Charleston, South Carolina, will once again work the ships of Nordana Lines.

In a major challenge to union rights on

the docks, the Danish shipping company began using a nonunion stevedoring company last December, paying workers less than half of what ILA members receive for working container ships. It was the first attempt by a container line calling at Charleston to use nonunion labor.

Members of ILA Local 1422 responded by picketing Nordana’s ships. On January 20 some 600 cops attacked hundreds of protesting workers to prevent them from reaching the docks.

## Defense of framed-up unionists

After this police riot, the cops, courts, and media went on a campaign to smear the union. Initial police charges against the unionists were dropped for lack of evidence, but a grand jury indicted four workers on felony “riot” charges, with state officials insisting that they are enforcing South Carolina’s antiunion “right-to-work” laws. A fifth unionist was indicted in recent weeks.

In the months since the police assault,

ILA members continued to picket every Nordana ship that came to port. They won backing from dockworkers across the United States and internationally in their fight to defend union rights and against the police frame-up.

In mid-April the ILA and Nordana reached an agreement, effective May 1, for ILA members to work the company’s ships under the union’s small-boats agreement. The pay rate is the same as for regular containerized ships, but the agreement allows smaller work gangs and more “work rule flexibility.”

According to union officials, the deal won’t apply if Nordana brings in ships larger than the capacity that defines the small boats. The first Nordana ship to be worked under this deal is due in port May 5. The defense effort for the indicted ILA members is continuing.

Contributions to ILA Local 1422’s Dockworkers’ Defense Fund can be sent to 910 Morrison Drive, Charleston, SC 29403, Attention: Robert Ford.

## THE MILITANT

### Independence for Puerto Rico!

As U.S. cops and troops forcibly reclaim the Navy bombing range in Vieques, the ‘Militant’ carries accurate reports of the struggle to get the U.S. Navy out, and of the growing depth of the anticolonial struggle in Puerto Rico. Don’t miss a single issue!



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# Iowa rally marks two years of Titan strike

RAY PARSONS

DES MOINES, Iowa—A lively rally of 700 strikers, other unionists, and supporters was held here April 29 to mark the two-year anniversary of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 164 strike at Titan Tire.

The strike, involving 670 workers, began May 1, 1998, in a fight against mandatory overtime and two-tier wages and for pension and health-care benefits for retired workers.

Thirty-four members of USWA Local 303L from Natchez, Mississippi, joined the rally. Some 500 Steelworkers there went on strike in September 1998 when Titan bosses refused to negotiate with the union as the purchase of that plant was finalized.

Titan is running the struck plants with scabs. Only a handful of union members have crossed the picket line.

The Titan fighters remain determined. Their confidence was captured in chants, picket signs, and T-shirts, including the slogan, "Hey Titan, settle or sell!"

Craig Spencer, a mold changer at Titan for 12 years, said the April 29 action showed that "we're stronger than when we first went out. We're telling these corporations that they're not going to treat us the way they do."

The rally brought Titan strikers together with other unionists on strike, workers with experience in past union battles, and workers anticipating future struggles.

In the weeks leading up to the rally, Local 164 members participated in other union rallies around the Midwest. Eight Titan strikers attended the 4,000-strong March 25 rally in support of USWA Local 169, locked out at AK Steel in Mansfield, Ohio. In April they joined with other unionists at a rally in Kansas City supporting workers locked out at the MEI foundry in Duluth, Minnesota. In Des Moines, the Titan strikers have been supporting Teamsters Local 147, whose members walked out December 30 at Smurfit-Stone Container.

This outreach has paid off handsomely. Among others, unionists from Mansfield and Kansas City, and Teamsters Local 147 strikers, joined the April 29 event.

One of those at the rally was Tim Risinger,

a member of USWA Local 169 who worked 12 years as a pipefitter at AK Steel in Mansfield before the bosses locked out the union in September. "I'm here because we've had a lot of support, and it needs to reach out around the world," he explained.

Workers from tire and rubber plants from several states came to the action. Contracts affecting 24,000 rubber workers around the country have expired or come up for mid-term "reopeners" in the last few weeks. Some 75 workers came from Bridgestone/Firestone (BSF) in Des Moines, and a busload of BSF workers arrived from Bloomington and Decatur, Illinois. Fifty USWA workers from Goodyear plants in Topeka, Kansas, and Lincoln, Nebraska, were there as well.

Greg Lewis, a member of USWA Local 310, has worked at BFS in Des Moines for two years. He came to the rally because "it's important we show solidarity, show we're all rooting for the fight at Titan." He said he'd like to see the new contract at BFS include changes in the onerous attendance policy, end the two-tier wage setup, and go back to eight-hour shifts. Most rubber workers around the country work 12-hour shifts three or four days per week.

Twenty-five college students from the University of Iowa in Iowa City came to the action. This came about after USWA officials organized workers from Des Moines to rally with students during a campus protest in early April. Ned Bertz, a leader of the Students against Sweatshops, spoke at the rally.

Randy Jasper, a dairy farmer from Muscoda, Wisconsin, and another farmer decided to come to the union rally because,

## Texas march for immigrant rights



Militant/Jacque Henderson  
Arriving in buses and cars from San Antonio, Houston, and other cities in Texas, 2,000 people took part in an April 30 march for immigrant rights in Dallas. The marchers, mostly Mexican immigrants and Chicanos, demanded legal residence for all undocumented workers.

he stated, "labor unions need farmers and farmers need the labor unions. We're fighting the same companies. We have the same enemies." Like most dairy farmers around the country, they have been hit hard by the steep

drop in milk prices paid to producers.

Ray Parsons is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 310 at Bridgestone/Firestone in Des Moines.

## Steelworkers in Ohio win back jobs

BY SALM KOLIS

HANNIBAL, Ohio—"There is a new generation of steelworkers coming up now, who are ready to fight," commented Matt Reusser, one of three members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 5724 who had been fired April 4. These unionists returned to work midnight shift on Friday, April 21. "We had a holiday dance scheduled for that evening, but it really turned into a victory dance," said Reusser.

On April 3, Dave Ivey and Pat Runion were fired for supposedly "directing the workforce." They were training a newly hired worker. This firing enraged other unionists because it's impossible to train a new person without giving them directions.

In a show of unity in the fight for a contract, members of USWA locals 5724 and 5760 have been holding informational picket lines at the plant gate through the week, and march together in and out of the plant. Steelworkers at Ormet Aluminum's Hannibal Reduction and Rolling Mill Divisions have been working under an extension of their contract, which expired May 31, 1999.

"Monday afternoon," Butch Blake explained, "we marched over there with fire in our eyes. The union warned the company that [Jeffrey] Woodell was trying to provoke us, and they did nothing to rein him in. These firings were the last straw." Blake has worked for Ormet for almost 10 years and currently works in the Pot Room. "I stay in the Pot Room, because that's where all the new people start and it's important for the union to talk to them before the company gets them."

Tuesday evening the company singled out three workers they considered "ringleaders" and fired them during the afternoon shift. These three workers were Reusser, Dean Moore, and Mark Smith. Moore and Reusser are union grievance representatives. They were dismissed for "participating in a march."

That evening 300 workers, nearly the entire shift, assembled at their picket shack outside one of the entrances to the aluminum plant. "We were on the verge of walking out then and there," explained Blake. "The company called the union and begged them to come down and cool us down."

"The company tried to break the spirit of C-shift, which has always been one of the strongest shifts, with these firings," explained Reusser. "But other guys stepped forward to organize the marches in and out of the plant." The unionists came back to work under an agreement not to file any grievances for a year, and with the stipulation that this inci-

dent will remain on file for a year.

During the contract fight, Ormet has fired 14 unionists. Of these, 10 have gotten their jobs back, one has decided to take another job, and three cases are in arbitration. Reusser explained that "the workers who were fired try to be a visible part of the picket lines, so co-workers know we are still part of the struggle."

The union printed up bright "prison orange" T-shirts that say "I was fired by corporate greed" for the fired unionists to wear at labor rallies.

Ormet filed suit against the Ohio Department of Transportation alleging infringement of the company's property rights. The company is appealing a ruling in that case by Monroe County Court Judge Harris for failing to issue an injunction against the union's

picket shack across from one of the entrances to the plant and the regular picket lines the unionists hold at shift change.

"Attendance on the picket line is up," reports Reusser, in the wake of all five of the unionists fired in April returning to work, and progress in contract talks. "Although contract negotiations have stepped up in the last two weeks, in their latest offer the company has backtracked on issues previously agreed to."

"With all the firings, we can't forget the real issues here are getting a cost-of-living adjustment clause, and maintaining our profit sharing and gain sharing," explained Diane Riggenbach, who has over 20 years at the plant and works in the Cast House.

Salm Kolis is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 1557 in Pittsburgh.

## Chicago janitors win contract

BY LISA POTASH

CHICAGO—Chanting "Yes we can!" in Spanish and Polish, and serenaded by a bugle and drums, several hundred janitors rallied here April 28 at their union hall, celebrating their winning a contract after 10 days on strike. The janitors, who work in Chicago's suburbs and are members of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1, won \$1.35 in wage increases over three years, with family medical insurance coverage in the third year.

The 4,500 workers had been making \$6.65 an hour, with no medical benefits. One janitor told the *Militant* he made only \$8.50 after working 15 years for the same cleaning firm.

This, the suburban janitors' first strike, came on the heels of a five-hour strike April 17 by janitors working under a separate contract in Chicago's downtown office buildings, which resulted in a \$1.10 wage increase over three years. Both strikes, particularly that of the lower-paid suburban janitors, won widespread working-class support.

Earlier that day, 51 suburban janitors on strike blocked traffic at a major intersection in the Oakbrook Terrace suburb. On April 26, hundreds picketed a downtown Chicago building that contracts with a cleaning firm that also does work in the suburbs. The building's janitors respected their picket line.

Lisa Potash is a sewing machine operator and a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in Chicago. Leah Finger, a member of the United Steelworkers of America, contributed to this article.

## Kaiser workers plan May 23 protest

BY SUSAN LAMONT

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama—In a boost to the Steelworkers fight against Kaiser Aluminum, the general counsel of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) announced at the end of April that it will file unfair labor practice charges against the company for an illegal lockout over the past 15 months. If upheld by administrative judges, Kaiser could be ordered to pay more than \$200 million in back wages.

"We felt from Day 1 that there was a basis for the charges we filed against the company," stated Sam Thomas, a member of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 5207 at Kaiser's Aluminum's Gramercy, Louisiana, plant. "We're planning a march and rally in Houston May 23 to bring attention to our lockout."

The action will take place in Houston the day before a meeting of the shareholders of Maxxam Inc., Kaiser's parent company. "We expect union members from all five locked-out Kaiser plants," said Thomas, who also encouraged other unionists to attend. The Kaiser workers held a similar successful action last year in Houston.

Some 2,900 USWA members have been locked out at five Kaiser plants in Washington state, Louisiana, and Ohio since January 14, 1999. They had gone on strike in September 1998. Three and a half months later, when the union offered to return to work and keep negotiating, the company locked them out.

Central issues in the contract fight include company demands to cut retiree health insurance benefits, weaken seniority, and eliminate hundreds of jobs through contracting out.

In addition, the federal Department of Energy and Bonneville Power Administration in Washington state proposed last week that discounted electricity rates could be denied to Kaiser's two plants in Spokane, Washington, where 2,000 members worked, because of Kaiser's actions in locking out the union members.

The union has been waging a campaign calling attention to the fact that Kaiser was receiving cheaper electricity rates. Public comment is being taken on this proposal.

The NLRB decision comes on the heels of the March 15 federal Mine Safety and Health Administration's (MSHA) decision to fine Kaiser Aluminum \$533,000 for safety violations at its Gramercy alumina refining plant. A massive explosion at that plant, which was being run at the time by scab labor, occurred on July 5, 1999, and led to the MSHA investigation. The plant has been shut since the explosion.

Negotiations with Kaiser will resume May 10-12. For more information on the May 23 rally, please call USWA members Wayne Trapp or Sam Thomas at (713) 960-9660.

Susan LaMont is a member of the United Steelworkers of America Local 2122 in Fairfield, Alabama.

# YS joins in working-class battles in Canada

The Young Socialists is an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the Young Socialists write to P.O. Box 33, Times Square Post Office, New York, NY 10108, or call (646) 263-8974, or send an e-mail to: [young\\_socialists@hotmail.com](mailto:young_socialists@hotmail.com)

BY BILL SCHMITT

TORONTO—Young Socialists from Detroit went to Toronto the third week of April to help build the Sixth Convention of the Communist League and to learn more about and participate in working-class politics in Canada. While there, the Young Socialists

joined picket lines put up by striking workers and discussed politics at two universities, a truck stop, a factory plant gate, while going door-to-door in working-class neighborhoods, and on a street corner where we sold a subscription to the *Militant*.

Wherever we went, the main issues people wanted to discuss were the Toronto municipal workers strike, which was recently settled, the Canadian rulers' assault on national health care, and the continuing struggle of the Quebecois for independence.

The picket lines we joined were at Toromont Industries, where workers are striking to defend their wages and cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), and at Maxim,

a company that makes plastic gloves, where members of the Canadian Auto Workers are on strike. At both places many workers were interested in broader politics and wanted to discuss the ideas of Malcolm X, the Cuban revolution, and what imperialism is. Several workers bought copies of the *Militant*.

A number of youth from Detroit, Toronto, and Montreal, who were interested in communism and the Young Socialists, participated in a forum on Saturday night.

The team provided the Toronto and Detroit Young Socialists chapters a good opportunity to collaborate more effectively with each other. Both organizations are fresh out of the experience of helping to build the

Congress of the Continental Latin America and Caribbean Students Organization (OCLAE) in Cuba, where they had the chance to meet young people from throughout the Americas, stand in solidarity with the Cuban revolution, and aim to win youth to a communist perspective. This spirit of activity continued right through the Communist League convention. The Canadian Young Socialists participated in a regional team that spanned from Vancouver to Toronto, and in another that went to the maritime provinces. At the end of the trip, the Young Socialists jointly held a raffle that raised Can\$200.

Bill Schmitt is a member of the Young Socialists in Detroit.

## Rightist is held after racist killings of five in Pittsburgh

BY DIANA NEWBERRY

PITTSBURGH—Public protests were called here in response to the April 28 killings of five people and the critical wounding of a sixth person. The police have arrested Richard Baumhammers, who holds anti-immigrant and rightist views, and charged him with homicide.

Three of those killed were immigrants—Thao Pham from Vietnam, Ji-Ye Sun from China, and Anil Thakur from India. The two other victims were Gary Lee, who is Black, and Anita Gordon, a neighbor of Baumhammers who is Jewish and who was shot six times. Sandit Patel from India was critically wounded.

Baumhammers, an immigration lawyer, also faces seven counts of "ethnic intimidation," arson, and vandalism. Police allege he started a fire at Gordon's place with a molotov cocktail, fired bullets at Beth El Congregation in South Hills—the synagogue attended by Gordon—and spray painted it with a swastika and the word "Jew."

Detectives say that files on Baumhammers's computer included a document calling for support for the "Free Market

Party...dedicated to the concerns of European Americans," and advocating an end to "Third World immigration."

On May 1, a press conference and protest meeting were held at the chapter headquarters of the NAACP, attended by representatives of the Chinese and Indian communities, as well as other Asian organizations, civil rights organizations, students, a broad range of religious groups, unionists, and others.

After a couple of hours of discussion, the coalition decided to call a protest rally around the themes of "Diversity, Respect, and Peace: A United Community Response," on May 5, at 4:00 p.m. in downtown Pittsburgh. The action has been endorsed by 45 organizations.

A candlelight vigil will be held after the rally to commemorate the two Asians who were killed. The vigil will start at 8:30 p.m. at Ya Fei Chinese Cuisine, Robinson Town Centre, where both men worked. The Asian organizations have set up a fund named the 428 Victims Foundation for the date in April on which the killings occurred.

Diana Newberry is a member of Local 133H of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

## Zimbabwe

Continued from Page 12

economic crisis, anger with cop assaults on workers, and ZANU-PF's failure to carry out radical land reform.

Under the Lancaster House agreement they negotiated in 1980 with the Rhodesian and British governments, the liberation parties had to agree there would be no nationalization of white commercial farms. Instead, any acquisitions would be acquired on a "willing buyer, willing seller" basis. There were few willing sellers. The latter provisions expired a decade later, but since 1990 relatively little redistribution has taken place. Many people complain that what redistribution there has been has benefited well-off supporters of the ruling party, including government ministers.

"The government's current indigenization policy enriches a few blacks at the expense of others," said Zindoga.

On April 27, police commissioner Augustine Chihuri invoked the Law and Order Maintenance Act—devised by the Rhodesian regime in 1960—ostensibly to prevent violence in the run-up to elections.

He announced roadblocks would be set up to prevent the movement of large groups of party political supporters. The act empowers the home affairs minister, they so choose, to ban meetings for up to three months.

Many working people say that the current occupations are taking place in a haphazard manner. They argue that the government should be responsible for land redistribution, and emphasize that it should be done equitably to benefit the peasantry. But they also reject charges, as reflected in the big-business media and some capitalist politicians, that the conflict is at root a racial one, as opposed to one between the landless and the wealthy landholders.

## Minnesota hotel workers beat back deportation of unionists



Militant/Michael Pennock

Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 17 members rally May 1 to demand a new contract with better pay and health coverage.

BY DOUG JENNESS

MINNEAPOLIS—In a significant victory for the labor movement, seven of eight hotel workers who had been threatened with deportation to Mexico have won an agreement from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) that they can remain in the United States for at least two years.

The INS arrested the eight workers last October during a union-organizing campaign at the Holiday Inn Express. Public protests at that time forced federal authorities to delay their deportation until a hearing was held. The National Labor Relations Board and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission investigated the case and negotiated an agreement in January that Holiday Inn Express pay each worker \$8,000 for workplace abuses.

When lawyers for the workers and the INS announced the accord that all but one could stay, more than 100 cheering supporters were on hand outside the immigration court in the Minneapolis suburb of Bloomington. The agreement does not cover an eighth worker, who had previously been deported from the United States and had reentered a second time without papers.

The victory has given a big boost to the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union (HERE) Local 17, which is currently in contract negotiations. Less than a week after the agreement was announced, hundreds of hotel workers and supporters rallied May 1 in front of the Minneapolis Hilton demanding a "fair contract now."

The spirited demonstrators—shouting chants, beating on pots and pans, and blowing whistles—demanded pay hikes, and employer-paid health care and English-language training. That day the contract covering 1,300 hotel workers at nine Minneapolis and Bloomington hotels expired. The union local has 4,000 members in the Twin Cities area.

Many participants sported red T-shirts with a coiled snake in front and inscribed with the promise, "Will strike if provoked." The back of the shirt bore the words: "Negotiating Committee 2000, Local 17." Several workers wearing the shirts explained that a contract committee of more than 80 workers, all volunteers from each department of the hotels involved in the negotiations, meets once

a week to review the hotel owners' offers and help keep workers in all the hotels informed of the status of negotiations. The contract committee has selected from its ranks a negotiating committee of 40.

The participants included contingents from the Service Employees International Union and United Food and Commercial Workers. Eight hotel workers organized by HERE Local 21 drove up from Rochester, Minnesota. Two representatives from the United Steelworkers Local 1028 who are locked out at MEI in Duluth, Minnesota, solicited support for their fight.

At the peak the demonstration reached 700 when a number of political organizations celebrating May Day joined the action for awhile.

### Socialist Workers 2000 National Campaign \$80,000 Fund

City	Goal	Paid	%
Twin Cities	5,000	1,650	33%
Des Moines	1,200	174	15%
Birmingham	3,500	350	10%
Detroit	3,000	300	10%
Seattle	6,000	500	8%
Atlanta	3,100	200	6%
Boston	3,750	525	14%
Newark	4,000	100	3%
Cleveland	2,250	68	3%
Houston	5,000	155	3%
Philadelphia	3,000	50	2%
Chicago	7,000	70	1%
Upper Manhattan	2,000	10	1%
Allentown	1,000	0	0%
Brooklyn	2,800	0	0%
Cape Girardeau	565	0	0%
Charlotte	1,850	0	0%
Chippewa Falls	500	0	0%
Fort Collins	250	0	0%
Fresno	300	0	0%
Los Angeles	6,000	0	0%
Miami	2,500	0	0%
N.Y. Garment Dist.	4,000	0	0%
Pittsburgh	3,000	0	0%
San Francisco	3,500	0	0%
St. Louis	1,300	0	0%
Washington	3,300	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$79,665</b>	<b>\$4,152</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Goal</b>	<b>\$80,000</b>		

### Young Socialists Fund Drive March 15–June 1

City	Goal	Raised	%
Birmingham	450	225	50%
Detroit	550	189	34%
Seattle	350	120	34%
Miami	400	125	31%
Chicago	800	205	26%
Twin Cities	650	115	18%
New York	1,000	119	12%
Tucson	200	20	10%
Atlanta	300		0%
Cleveland	350		0%
Fresno	200		0%
Ft. Collins	75		0%
Los Angeles	450		0%
Newark	700		0%
Philadelphia	500		0%
Santa Cruz	250		0%
Valdosta	200		0%
Washington	200		0%
San Francisco		20	
Other		100	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,625</b>	<b>\$1,238</b>	<b>16%</b>



# Sales teams respond to INS assault

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Supporters of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* across the United States and elsewhere hit the streets this past week, taking special issues of the socialist press to plant gates, in working-class neighborhoods, and on the job to present a communist voice on the INS assault in Miami.

The *Militant* was headlined "INS assault in Miami strikes blow to the working class." It featured an editorial titled "In defense of the Cuban Revolution, in defense of the working class" and an article, "Call for federal troops to enforce civil rights: a world apart from Miami INS assault."

Socialist workers were also armed with a special eight-page issue of *Perspectiva Mundial* carrying those two articles and an editorial calling for protests against Washington's moves in Vieques, Puerto Rico.

As the big-business media, as well as middle-class political forces, fell increasingly in line behind the Clinton administration's INS raid, these political weapons have offered an opportunity to join the issues and bring a clear working-class

explanation at a time when clarity is deeply needed.

Reporting from Miami, Rachele Fruit, a member of the International Association of Machinists, said, "In one hour we sold one *PM* sub and 14 copies of the special edition of *Perspectiva Mundial*." She added, "The U.S. rulers have really done a job appealing to the Black community for support of the raid. Many people say, 'I have nothing against the government,' and we see a number of U.S. flags flying in the neighborhood."

Mike Italie, a garment worker in Miami who joined with Fruit campaigning with the *Militant*, said, "I got into a lot of extended discussions. Everybody I talked to supported the raid, even those who bought the paper. They thought I made some good points and wanted to read more about it. They said the kid belonged with his dad and the Miami relatives defied the law. They were caught in this bind—either you support the right-wingers or the INS."

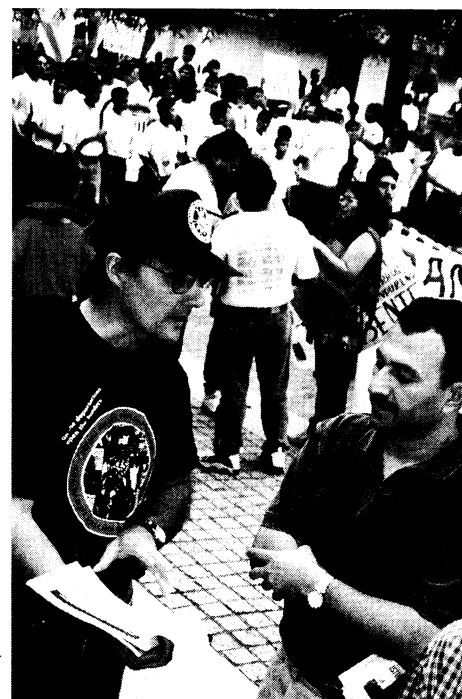
Italie said they sold 11 copies of the *Militant*, 19 copies of the *Perspectiva Mundial* special edition, 5 copies of the May issue of

*PM*, and 2 *PM* subs. They also ordered 30 more copies of the *PM* special edition.

From southern Minnesota Francisco Picado, a meat packer, said, "One of my co-workers who bought a *Militant* subscription this week was someone we've been talking to since the subscription campaign began. He knows we support the Cuban revolution, but he also recognized we could see past that based on our discussions on the INS assault. I'm convinced that in his eyes we gained some credibility."

"Another co-worker, who was a farmer in Mexico, initially supported the INS attack when we first started talking about it. He went with me to the rally for the Titan Tire strikers in Des Moines, Iowa. He came back from the action fired up and sold a *Perspectiva Mundial* sub to a farm worker he knows," said Picado.

"The next day he came by my house where we spent an hour and a half talking about the INS raid and its implications, including the North American military command, the brutal tone of the INS operation, and the strengthening of the immigration cops. He has purchased a number of Path-



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

Participant at immigrant rights rally in Dallas checks out *Perspectiva Mundial*.

finder titles and joined in discussions on the book *Capitalism's World Disorder*."

Picado said socialist workers in Minnesota sold five *Militant* subscriptions to participants at the Iowa rally, including one to a striker. Four people bought subs on the bus ride back to Minnesota.

"They were people we met who work at a plant that make cans for Spam. When we brought up the INS operation, at first they justified it, saying 'what else could the government do?'"

Picado said two of the new subscribers were members of the Steelworkers union who were supporters of the 1985-86 Hormel meat packers strike and had gotten arrested with some of the P-9 strikers.

## Miners build May 17 national march

Continued from front page

Employee Act for the 21st century," or "CARE 21." According to an April 11 UMWA press release, the measure "would immediately transfer \$172 million in Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund interest money to the UMWA's Combined Benefit Fund. The legislation would also ensure future funding as needed to the Fund."

The fight to defend miners' health-care legislation, also known as the Coal Act, was at the center of the recent 52nd Constitutional convention of the UMWA. "Defend the Coal Act. Keep the Promise" is the main campaign of the union. Cradle-to-grave health care benefits were won through a massive mobilization of coal miners in the late 1940s.

The union knows it will take a sustained fight to pass the legislation. Capitalist politicians from Wyoming are leading the charge against using funds from the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund, calling it nothing less than a "bailout" of the union.

The rally is being built through the district and regional offices of the union. Buses

will be organized from several locations throughout the Appalachian coalfields. Calls from retired miners manning phones at District offices are being made to individuals who participated in mass meetings organized by the union to defend the Coal Act last September. In all, some 7,000 miners, mostly retired UMWA members who had toiled in the mines for decades, attended meetings held around the country.

In the coal mines, a discussion has broken out over how working miners will be able to attend the rally. Right now coal miners are scheduled to work on May 17, a Wednesday, which is a regular working day. In the past few years, the coal bosses have organized coal production seven days a week and implemented six-day workweeks, with regular forced overtime and stricter attendance policies.

In some portals, sign-up sheets are being posted in the bathhouses for those who want to attend. Some miners plan to take the day off no matter what, while most hope the union will organize time off for those who want to get on the buses.

The UMWA is reaching out to the National Black Lung Clinics Association and the National Black Lung Association.

UMWA District 12, centered in southern Illinois, has chartered 13 buses and plans to fill about 700 seats. The buses will depart May 16.

The coal bosses have received a helping hand from several adverse court decisions. The biggest blow came in 1998 when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Eastern Enterprises was not required to make premium payments to the CBF. Challenging this assertion, the union said Eastern transferred operations to a subsidiary, Eastern Associated Coal Corp., until it was sold off in 1987. Through the ruling, Eastern was let off the hook and 1,500 coal miners were left out in the cold. Then in 1999 the courts ordered the union to pay back \$40 million to several Alabama coal companies.

These decisions have opened the flood gates. Recently, a federal court in Pennsylvania ruled that the Berwind Corporation of Philadelphia "is not responsible for paying retroactive retirement benefits," according to a news release from the National Mining Association, a pro-coal boss publication. "The ruling could help other coal companies limit payments to the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Combined Benefits Fund."

The CBF is funded by some 300 coal operators, both current and former, and pays out an estimated \$31 million a month. Today the fund is in the red by nearly \$50 million, and over the next five years the deficit is projected to be in excess of \$250 million. A union fact sheet notes that "unless more money is made available, the beneficiaries will be faced with disastrous benefit cuts that will imperil their health."

Pressures on the fund are part of the reorganization and consolidation taking place in the coal industry, with the closing of "in-

efficient" mines and laying off of thousands of miners. This past year Pittston Co., for decades one of the largest coal producers, announced it is pulling out of the coal industry. Like other coal companies, Pittston is watching these court decisions closely to see if it can wiggle out of "legacy costs"—a coal boss term for paying lifetime benefits to coal miners.

Where we stand at end of week 5			
	Mil	PM	NI
Week 7			
Week 6			
Week 5			

Militant/PM Subscription Drive in the Unions				
	Militant	PM	NI	
	Goal/Sold	%	Goal/Sold	Goal/Sold
<b>UK</b>				
TGWU	3 2	67%		
RMT	3 1	33%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>6 3</b>	<b>50%</b>		
<b>Australia</b>				
MUA	3 2	67%		1
TCFUA	2	0%		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 2</b>	<b>40%</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>U.S.</b>				
USWA	40 17	43%	3 1	16 2
IAM	45 19	42%	10 5	20 5
UFCW	35 13	37%	20 12	15 6
UTU	32 10	31%	3 2	10 3
UAW	17 5	29%	3 1	9 2
UNITE	35 6	17%	25 4	16 1
<b>Total</b>	<b>204 70</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>64 25</b>	<b>86 19</b>
<b>Canada</b>				
UFCW	3	0%	1	4
UNITE	4	0%	2 1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>3 1</b>	<b>6</b>

IAM—International Association of Machinists; MUA—Maritime Union of Australia; RMT—National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers; TCFUA—Textile, Clothing, and Footwear Union of Australia; TGWU—Transport and General Workers Union; UAW—United Auto Workers; UFCW—United Food and Commercial Workers; UNITE—Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; USWA—United Steelworkers of America; UTU—United Transportation Union

Militant/PM Subscription Drive March 25–May 21							
	Militant			PM		NI	
Country	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
<b>Sweden</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Australia</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>New Zealand</b>							
Christchurch	12	8	67%	1		3	2
Auckland	20	7	35%	1	1	3	
<b>N.Z. total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>United States</b>							
Chippewa Falls*	25	18	72%	18	11	10	7
St. Louis	15	9	60%	5	2	10	5
Washington	30	18	60%	10	6	11	7
Tucson	5	3	60%	2		2	2
Seattle	40	24	60%	12	4	12	2
Charlotte	10	6	60%	3	1	5	1
Atlanta	30	18	60%	10	5	12	7
Allentown	15	9	60%	2	1	5	
Los Angeles*	60	34	57%	40	28	30	20
Chicago	40	21	53%	15	3	15	10
Cape Girardeau	12	6	50%	4		4	
Des Moines	30	14	47%	15	8	10	2
Twin Cities	35	16	46%	8	2	10	
Birmingham	45	20	44%	5	1	15	3
Pittsburgh	25	11	44%	2	1	8	
Fort Collins	12	5	42%	1	1	4	
Cleveland	25	10	40%	8		5	
Philadelphia	35	14	40%	10	5	15	8
San Francisco	50	20	40%	20	8	25	3
Detroit	45	16	36%	8	1	15	
Newark	65	23	35%	25	19	25	7
Miami	40	12	30%	15	5	20	11
Boston	35	9	26%	10	3	15	5
Houston	35	8	23%	15	6	12	6
Upper Manhattan	55	6	11%	20	6	20	10
Fresno	12	1	8%	8		6	
N.Y. Garment Dist	60	5	8%	20	6	20	10
Brooklyn	55	4	7%	10	1	25	
<b>U.S. total</b>	<b>941</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>Canada</b>							
Toronto	25	9	36%	6	4	20	11
Vancouver	25	7	28%	5	2	12	10
Montreal	16		0%	6	1	15	6
<b>Canada total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Iceland</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>1</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>United Kingdom</b>							
London	40	7	18%	8	4	20	9
Manchester	24	3	13%	2	1	12	1
<b>UK total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>France</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Int'l totals</b>	<b>1136</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>Goal/Should be</b>	<b>1100</b>	<b>688</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>283</b>
<b>*raised goal</b>							

# Revolutionary Cuba's sovereignty is issue

## Continued from front page

sovereignty are part of the unrelenting efforts by the U.S. imperialist rulers to punish the working people of Cuba for establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat in this hemisphere—"the first free territory of the Americas," as revolutionists in that country proudly and defiantly point out. Washington's course after rescuing Elián González was aimed, among other things, at bolstering the reactionary 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act, which seeks to entice Cubans to leave the country for the United States by offering them expedited citizenship papers and assistance not granted by the U.S. government to immigrants from anywhere else in the world.

As Fidel Castro once again emphasized before hundreds of thousands who turned out for the May Day demonstration in Havana, the rescue of Elián González "would have been a simple migratory case if it had not involved a Cuban child."

Cuban sovereignty, the Cuban revolution, U.S. capital's economic depredations and aggression against Cuba, the U.S. government's refusal for 40 years to establish normal diplomatic relations—these have been the issues underlying Washington's use and abuse of a six-year-old.

## Miami politics transformed

The Elián González case registers the end of an era in South Florida. No longer can an organized counterrevolutionary cadre among Cuban emigrés, whose quasimilitary formations at one time acted with relative impunity, dominate politics there.

Among the some 800,000 residents of

A turning point came in 1996, when the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba, after repeated warnings, shot down two planes from a Miami-based outfit called Brothers to the Rescue that were attempting to overfly Cuban territory. Some 60,000 people filled Miami's Orange Bowl for a tribute to the four downed pilots at the time. But in fact it was a requiem for the declining paramilitary groups, and their counterrevolutionary illusions. They had sustained a blow from which they have not recovered—and never can.

That downward political trajectory has been accelerated over the past five months by the sustained mobilization of Cuban working people and youth demanding that Elián González be returned to Cuba—and by the increasingly broad popular assent that demand has received among working people in the United States.

What's more, the refusal once again of the Cuban government and people to bend in face of Washington's pressure is precipitating a further shift in bourgeois public opinion in the United States. In recent weeks, more and more voices within U.S. big business and among their paid propagandists have been saying that it is simply no longer productive for Washington to maintain its bar on all trade and diplomatic relations with Cuba.

The *Militant* received a good many letters about last week's editorial and the article by this writer condemning the INS assault in Miami as "a blow to the working class"—more than the editor has room to print even in an expanded, full-page letters column. The *Militant* also received reports from discussions at Militant Labor Forums

own" bourgeoisie, the masters of modern finance capital. Our starting point is not winning concessions from the exploiters, but how to educate and mobilize working people along a line of march that can culminate in getting rid of the exploiters. Along that road, the toilers will win the maximum concessions. But above all, through revolutionary class independence we will prepare the ground to overthrow the imperialist rulers whose march toward fascism and war poses historic dangers to working people, the Cuban revolution, and all humanity.

It's only among those who share this class objective and standpoint, of course, that there is common ground for discussion.

In an earlier e-mail, Wald wrote that she thought "sending roses to Janet Reno was going overboard in one direction," but that "the *Militant's* editorial position is going overboard in the other." Wald's reference was to an exchange in last week's *Militant* letters column headlined "Flowers for Reno?"

But Wald's own April 22 letter reprinted in last week's letters column issued a call to write individual letters of "congratulations" to Reno, Clinton, Gore, INS Commissioner Doris Meissner, Hillary Clinton, and Tipper Gore.

## Crowd control advice

Wald may not have sent flowers to Janet Reno. But in an April 13 letter also printed in the letters column, Wald did send the attorney general something else that had a different fragrance: advice on police crowd control methods.

"The solution is really simple," Wald wrote to Reno. "As a journalist I've seen it done on dozens of occasions in various cities and states around the country: Send in officers to clear away the crowd, declaring it an illegal gathering and giving them five minutes to disperse; arresting those who fail to obey the law. Including all the reporters and cameras. [The INS SWAT squad did deck an NBC camera crew and smash their equipment, but not even Clinton, Reno, and Meissner thought they could jail the entire press corps and blindfold the entire world!—SC] Remove everyone from a five block radius."

We don't know for sure the various places in the United States Wald has been favorably impressed as she has "seen it done on dozens of occasions." But cop action of the kind she urges on Janet Reno has been carried out on *thousands* of occasions against striking workers, civil rights demonstrators, anti-Vietnam War activists, and many others in the United States and throughout the capitalist world. And the further away the cops or paramilitary commanders can keep the press or photographers, the better they like it—for reasons those of us who have been on the receiving end know all too well.

Of course, neither Janet Reno's "Justice Department" nor any other section of the U.S. government police apparatus needs "advice" on repression. But Wald's casualness, even pride, in proffering such advice to U.S. imperialism's top police official sheds additional light on another aspect of her other letter run in this week's issue.

"Just as you would not condemn the police force in a capitalist city for any number of proper actions they take on behalf of the citizenry—against murders and rapists, for instance—simply on the basis that at other times the police force acts in unacceptable ways. Criticize what they do wrong, and commend what they do right."

But from the standpoint of any class-conscious working person—let alone communists—the "police force in a capitalist city" *never* acts on behalf of the so-called citi-



Militant/Brian Taylor

**April rally in Havana demanding return of Elián González. Cuban people have mobilized in defense of sovereignty.**



**Police under capitalism never act on behalf of "the citizenry." They always act to defend the exploiting class—that's their job. Above: New York protesters react angrily at being caged in by cops at March 18 action against cop killing of Patrick Dorismond.**

Cuban origin in the Miami area, social differentiation, political heterogeneity, and integration into U.S. politics and the class struggle are more advanced than at any time over the past four decades.

Prominent bourgeois figures within the Cuban-American community, for example, including the chairman of the University of Miami board of trustees, were deeply involved with U.S. government officials in the negotiations with attorneys for Lázaro González.

Attitudes toward normalizing relations with Cuba are more differentiated among workers of Cuban origin. Tens of thousands of Cuban-Americans travel to the island each year to visit family members. The ideological homogeneity among middle-class and professional layers is coming unstuck.

As a result, the openings for class-conscious working people and revolutionary-minded youth—including communist workers—to carry out organized political activity in Miami around a broad range of questions are greater than ever before. Intimidation from the ultraright is less and less effective.

These shifts are a combined product of the broader sea change in working-class politics across the United States and much of the imperialist and semicolonial world, as well as the intransigence of the working people and communist leadership in Cuba in defending their national sovereignty and integrity, the socialist character of their revolution.

in cities and towns across the United States, as well as on conversations with working people and youth during sales of the paper on street corners, on the job, and elsewhere.

To clarify the issues at stake, it's useful to respond to arguments raised in a letter in sharp disagreement with the *Militant*. In a letter e-mailed around the world, and printed here in the letters column, Karen Wald writes that the SWAT-style assault by special forces of *la migra's* Border Patrol "was simply the only way to rescue a small child being illegally held."

## Irreconcilable classes

From the standpoint of the exploited and oppressed, however, a question posed this way can never produce an answer in the interests of the working class. Because it proposes that those of us in the workers movement share responsibility with the capitalist rulers and imperialist state—whose interests are irreconcilable with ours—in solving *their* problems and resolving *their* dilemmas.

Malcolm X used to say that in the days before the U.S. Civil War, when the slavemaster got sick, the house slave would say, "'What's the matter boss, we sick?'" When the master's house caught afire, he'd try and put the fire out." But the field slave would "pray that the master died. If the master's house caught afire, they'd pray for a strong wind."

The latter is what marks the course of class-conscious workers today toward "our

zenry. The police *always* act to defend the class interests of the exploiting class whose interests it is their job, *their only job*, to serve and protect. The "citizenry," stripped of all class distinctions, is—and can only be—the exploiters' obfuscatory fiction and self-serving justification, not ours.

In the centers of imperialism in particular, Lenin taught us more than 80 years ago in his as-necessary-as-ever booklet *State and Revolution*, there is "an unprecedented strengthening of the 'state machinery' and an unprecedented growth of its bureaucratic and military apparatus, side by side with the increase of repressive measures against the proletariat," including in "the freest republican countries."

Can anyone imagine combing all 45 volumes of Lenin's *Collected Works* and finding even one word of advice to the police of tsarist Russia or anywhere else in the capitalist world?

## Capitalist 'justice'

Does this mean communists never call on the capitalist state to enforce democratic rights and protections won by working people through bloody struggle? Of course not.

An aspect of the *Militant's* long record on this question was reviewed in last week's issue, in an article on the powerful proletarian social movement responsible for the destruction of Jim Crow segregation across the U.S. South.

But class-conscious fighters for Black rights knew that the Kennedy and Johnson administrations were not "acting on behalf of the citizenry" when they were forced to federalize the National Guard or send in U.S. troops in response to demands from a growing mass movement. The vanguard of Black rights fighters, many of whom were organizing armed self-defense against racist terror, raised further demands as opposed to "commending" the White House. They took advantage of the political space they had won and used it to advance as far as they were strong enough to press.

Nor, as last week's article explained, did the use of federal troops strengthen—politically, morally, or otherwise—the position of the capitalist state to use arbitrary force and abridge the hard-won democratic rights of the toilers. To the contrary, the rights conquered by working people and the labor movement were expanded in ways the U.S. rulers—despite their current assaults on many fronts, with the Clinton administration in the vanguard—have been able to erode but cannot reverse short of bloody defeats for the toilers in major class battles

**Continued on next page**



still to come.

What about the "proper actions" of the police "against murderers and rapists"?

The capitalist police don't take action against murderers and rapists. They take action against those *they* accuse—and then most of the time *convict* and *sentence*—as "murderers," "rapists," "burglars," "armed robbers" (who are usually found to have "resisted arrest," to boot, and treated accordingly). The real "growth industry" among the U.S. cops, courts, and "Justice Department" over the past decade—largely responsible for the unprecedented explosion of the U.S. prison population, especially among Black youth—has been those *accused* of drug-dealing.

This is how capitalist police forces operate all the time, not "at other times." This is not what they "do wrong," it is *what they do*.

In Illinois this simple fact of capitalist society began taking on such a stench among broad layers of working people over the past few years that even the conservative, pro-death penalty Governor George Ryan was compelled to issue a moratorium on executions, acknowledging there is no justice in the courts. His action was neither "com-

mendable," nor taken "on behalf of the citizenry." Ryan simply made a cold-blooded political decision in face of well-publicized evidence that in Illinois alone, 12 human beings had been executed since 1973 while 13 others on death row—more than half—had been exonerated and released. Nationally over that same period, 85 death-row prisoners had been released—1 for every 7 executed.

#### 'Humanitarian intervention'

Nor are the implications of the question "What else could they have done?" limited to support for the rulers' exercise of police power domestically in the United States and other imperialist countries. To the contrary. Among growing layers of bourgeois liberals, middle-class radicals, and centrists in the workers movement, there are mounting calls for imperialist-organized troops, flying the United Nations banner, to conduct "humanitarian intervention" around the world—to echo the headline of a recent feature section of the liberal, popular-frontist *Nation* magazine.

Proponents of this course point to "terrible dilemmas."

"How else are 'we' to stop the horrible



Thousands, including many from Miami, protested in January in Tallahassee, Florida, defending affirmative action. As Miami politics changes with integration of Cuban-Americans into U.S. society, class-struggle openings are greater than ever.

tribal genocide in 'failed states' such as Rwanda?" they ask.

"If NATO had not sent tens of thousands of troops into Bosnia and Kosova—whatever the righteous criticism of their excesses—how else were 'we' to stop the ethnic cleansing?"

"Without the 'peacekeeping' force led by Australian imperialism last year, how else could 'we' have rescued the innocent people of East Timor, terrorized by the rightist mi-

litas sponsored by the Indonesian regime?"

And we can expand the list: (Reaching back in history 35 years, for example, it could be asked: "How else could 'we' turn back the Belgian- and U.S.-organized mercenaries in the Congo without the UN intervention force?—the UN forces that at best stood by and did nothing while Congolese prime minister Patrice Lumumba was seized by rightist forces and later murdered. Che Guevara and the Cuban revolution gave a different answer.)

As the *Militant* editorial pointed out last week, the imperialist rulers "do at home what they do abroad. Foreign policy is always ultimately an expression of the real trajectory of domestic policy." In an interview in another prominent liberal magazine, *The Progressive*, David McReynolds—the Socialist Party-USA's 2000 presidential candidate and retired leader of the War Resisters League—drew the parallel quite succinctly: "What we are lacking [once again, who is 'we'?—SC] is some kind of international United Nations police force.... It needs to be a police force that is not carrying AK-47s as much [as much!!] as it is carrying nonlethal means of crowd control and is trained in medical care.... There are lots of tricks for keeping crowds under moderate control and we haven't succeeded." [Another advisor! And this time not just for Janet Reno, but for the NATO Command and Joint Chiefs of Staff]

#### Rationalizations for imperialist war

Such rationalizations for imperialist war and carnage are not new, either in the workers movement or among bourgeois and middle-class radicals and pacifists. As the workers and peasants of Russia were led into the slaughter of World War I, their class-collaborationist misleaders asked: "How else are 'we' to stop the depredations of the German Kaiser?" The workers and farmers of Germany were told by their misleaders: "How else are 'we' to resist the backwardness and expansionism of the Russian tsar?" And the betrayers of the working-class movement in the United States helped the rulers mobilize workers as cannon fodder in support of president Woodrow Wilson's promise of "a war to end all wars" and to rescue oppressed peoples across Europe and ensure them "national self-determination." The Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin provided an example in practice of the effective—and definitive—reply.

During the Second World War, once again, misleaders of labor and the oppressed told working people: "How else will 'we' defeat Hitler, and help the Soviet Union defend itself, if the working class does not support the imperialist government of Franklin Roosevelt and its war policies?" Using that rationalization, workers were told they were "undermining the war effort" if they didn't support the federal wage freeze and no-strike pledge. Blacks were told they were "objectively" aiding the Nazis if they demonstrated to demand equal rights in wartime industries and in the U.S. armed forces itself. Puerto Ricans were denounced as reactionary nationalists for resisting the draft. Japanese-Americans were told to go peacefully into Roosevelt's *Nisei* concentration camps if they wanted to prove their patriotism and truly help the Soviet workers and peasants turn back Hitler's invasion force.

And the *Militant* stood alone in the workers movement in August 1945 in condemning the barbaric U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. How else, after all, could the peoples of Korea, Vietnam, and

Continued on Page 10

# Debate in Miami over INS raid

BY BILL KALMAN  
AND ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

MIAMI—In the aftermath of the commando-style raid by Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) agents and U.S. marshals to remove six-year-old Elián González from the home of his great-uncle here, there is broader backing among the U.S. rulers for the operation ordered by U.S. attorney general Janet Reno.

Leaders of the Republican Party who condemned the assault on the home of Lázaro González have backed away from earlier calls to launch Congressional hearings on the matter. U.S. senator Orrin Hatch, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, who had scheduled a hearing for May 3, postponed it. Hatch indicated his committee might not hold hearings at all if the U.S. Justice Department provides an adequate explanation about the raid in writing.

#### Different rallies in response to INS raid

Tens of thousands turned out for a rally in Little Havana here April 25. Rightist Cuban-American groups, including the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF) and the Democracy Movement, had called the action to denounce the INS raid and get a wider hearing for their demand to keep Elián González in the United States and for slanders against the Cuban Revolution.

The majority at the rally, though not all, were Cuban-Americans. Many backed the right-wing, anticommunist slogans of the rally organizers.

A certain number of people who support returning Elián to Cuba, however, came to the action because organizers had built it as a protest against the INS raid, but did not share the reactionary outlook of the organizers. Two garment workers at a plant in Miami Lakes, for example, said they favored the return of the six-year-old boy to Cuba but went to the rally to show their anger at *la migra*. The two, one originally from Ecuador and other from Peru, asked that their names not be used.

Protesters carried U.S. and Cuban flags. Later during the action, some burned the U.S. flag. A few protesters carried signs saying, "Say no to police donations" and "Please don't hurt me: I'm peacefully protesting."

Others came to show their opposition to the widespread prejudice against the Cuban-American community spread by the media and most capitalist politicians. "The Cuban people have been presented as boorish, dumb, and reactionary, and that's just so unfair," Nieves López, an English teacher, told the *Miami Herald*. "Some people complain that they have given Cubans everything. My father was not given anything. My parents came to this country poor. They worked at very menial jobs and saved to send me to college."

The big-business media and politicians here portray Cuban-Americans as a single, reactionary "ethnic" bloc that is privileged.

In this way they promote chauvinism against them among sections of the population who are not Cuban—including workers who are white, U.S.-born Blacks, Haitians, and other Spanish-speaking workers.

At the same time, small reactionary demonstrations backed Reno's action. About 2,500 turned out for one such rally in South Dade County on the sidewalks of U.S. Highway 1. Organized by small businessman Rick Hartwell and others, it had a pro-U.S. government, "America First," anti-immigrant character. Organizers said they opposed the burning of U.S. flags by Cuban-Americans and castigated Miami mayor Joseph Carollo and Miami-Dade County mayor Alex Penelas for supporting defiance of Reno's edicts. Signs at this rally included: "Thanks Reno," "Proud to be American," "Stop the Banana Republic," and "This is America: Speak English." Many in the rally carried U.S. flags. Several in the crowd flew the Confederate flag.

Protesters at the U.S. Highway 1 demonstration included a noticeable number of African-Americans. The *Miami Times*, a weekly oriented to the Black community here, featured a front-page article in its April 26-May 2 issue with the headline "Elián is gone: 'Thank God' say most in the Black community." The editorial in that issue stated, "It is sickening to hear some of our respected community leaders blaming Attorney General Janet Reno for being too hasty. Many people feel she leaned over far too backward in trying to make a deal with a family that is clearly dysfunctional.... We commend Janet Reno for orchestrating a well-planned and bloodless rescue of Elián."

After the April 29 demonstrations, a few Blacks and others could be seen driving their cars with U.S. flags hanging from their windows in majority-Black neighborhoods.

#### Crisis in Miami city government

As the Clinton administration maintains the offensive, the mayor of Miami has become increasingly isolated since the INS assault, which he vocally opposed. A week after the raid Carollo fired city manager Donald Warshaw after he refused the mayor's demand to fire police chief William O'Brien. Under the city charter, only the city manager has the authority to hire or fire police officials.

Carollo had condemned O'Brien for not informing him ahead of time of the INS raid. The police chief had been informed by federal authorities and cooperated with Reno's assault, an action he defended publicly. After the announcement of Warshaw's firing, O'Brien resigned, calling Carollo "divisive and destructive." The city manager then appointed a new police chief, Raúl Martínez.

Carollo called Warshaw an "extortionist" and appointed two lawyers to investigate allegations that the city manager has misused his office. On May 2, Warshaw filed a suit against Carollo, charging him with cor-

ruption, and said he would stay on the job until the case is settled. A local judge backed Warshaw's stance.

These events continue to be a hot topic of discussion among workers. At AeroThrust, a jet engine overhaul facility next to Miami International Airport, some Cuban workers who oppose U.S. policy toward Cuba did not support the INS raid. "One young Cuban mechanic there who is Black had been listening to Cuban president Fidel Castro's May Day speech on the radio before work," reported Rachele Fruit, who works there. He said he had attended a protest in Hialeah against the INS raid "because I didn't like the way they did it. Those people weren't armed."

#### Differing views on INS raid

Most workers at this factory, where about half the workforce are Cuban-Americans, opposed the INS raid, for a variety of reasons. Some identified with the effort to keep the six-year-old boy in Miami and attended the April 29 rally in Little Havana for those reasons.

A minority among them, however, especially those who favor normalization of relations with Cuba, backed the April 22 government raid. A Cuban-American worker at that plant who opposes the U.S. embargo of Cuba expressed sympathy toward the pro-"American" demonstration. "We need a strong city government and police chief without the Cubans who came here 40 years ago," he said.

Few workers saw through the reactionary character of both rallies. Julio, a knitting machine operator at a garment plant on the outskirts of Miami, condemned both April 29 demonstrations as reactionary. "Those right-wing Cubans who called the rally on Saturday cynically used a child for their own anticommunist interests," he said. "They now want to fool us as being against *la migra*. What does it matter if his father may be a communist? Elián belongs in Cuba." Julio, who asked that only his first name be used, also said the U.S. Highway 1 demonstration was racist. "How can people support a rally with Confederate flags and English-only signs?"

The majority at this plant opposed the assault ordered by Reno. Some workers who backed the INS raid pointed out how the Clinton administration was using it to help gain acceptance for its impending assault in Vieques, Puerto Rico. Paulette, a sewing machine operator at the same clothing plant, said sending U.S. Marines to Vieques "is wrong. And saying they may do it at 'Elián time' makes me pause to consider what I thought of the raid before."

Bill Kalman is a member of the United Transportation Union. Argiris Malapanis is a garment worker. Rachele Fruit, a member of International Association of Machinists Local 1162, contributed to this article.

# U.S. forces evict anti-Navy protesters from Vieques

Continued from front page

island of Vieques. The protesters have been opposing the use of the island for bombing practice by the U.S. Navy.

Students at the University of Puerto Rico shut down the campus in opposition to the evictions carried out in a predawn raid by hundreds of U.S. cops and marines.

At 5:15 a.m. that day, some 200 FBI agents and 100 U.S. marshals, backed up by 1,200 U.S. Marines, evicted some 160 protesters at a Navy bombing range on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques.

At the entrance of the U.S. Navy's Camp García, Puerto Rican antiriot police blocked off the highway as masked U.S. marshals rolled onto the site of a protest in vans with no headlights on. Protesters refused to leave, but submitted to arrests without tussle. Some 30 people were mounted onto trucks and taken inside the military facility.

Meanwhile, U.S. military helicopters swooped down on the bombing range in eastern Vieques. FBI agents handcuffed and removed close to 140 protesters from 12 camp sites in the area. The protesters were shipped off to the U.S. naval base at Roosevelt Roads on the main island. While U.S. authorities chose not to charge them, they took down their names and warned them that they would be arrested on trespassing charges if they returned to Navy territory.

At the same time, the U.S. Coast Guard, aided by the marines, established a three-mile-wide "security" zone in the waters around the base on Vieques to block more protesters from arriving. They intercepted at least nine boats that morning. Protesters vowed to continue to penetrate the military-controlled territory.

Pentagon officials have said they intend to resume Navy bombing exercises on Vieques within two weeks. Washington is intent on sending a decisive message to opponents of the U.S. military presence.

Among those detained were dozens of Vieques residents; Lolita Lebrón, a longtime

independence fighter and former political prisoner; Ismael Guadalupe Ortiz, and Robert Rabin, both leaders of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques.

Also removed were some 40 religious figures and several U.S. politicians, including New York city councilman Jose Rivera, and U.S. Congresspeople Nydia Velázquez and Luis Gutiérrez, from New York and Illinois, respectively.

## Washington sets stage for 'reinvansion'

The Clinton administration's decision to launch the police-military operation on Vieques took place after the April 22 assault by U.S. immigration cops and marshals on a private home in Miami—carried out in the name of returning Cuban boy Elián González to his father. Within days of the INS operation in Miami, three U.S. warships steamed to Vieques with the marines. For a few days they loomed offshore, while helicopters frequently buzzed over the camps and Humvees and other military vehicles made passes near the range, trying to unnerve protesters.

Agapito Belardo, a leader of the camp in front of Camp García, told the *Militant* in a phone interview that townspeople were awoken by protesters as the arrests were being made. A large part of the town's population went to the main square to oppose the evictions. "People were outraged," Belardo said. In April 1999, a U.S. Navy plane "acci-

dentally" dropped a 500-pound bomb that killed Vieques resident David Sanes. This touched off a groundswell of demonstrations demanding the Navy stop bombing Vieques and get out. With growing support, opponents of the U.S. Navy presence on the Puerto Rican island set up civil disobedience camps on the Navy bombing range.

In face of these protests, and to try to defuse them, U.S. president William Clinton won the agreement of Puerto Rican colonial governor Pedro Rosselló on a deal. According to this agreement, a referendum is to be held no later than 2002 where Vieques residents are given two choices: to keep the Navy on their land, or for the U.S. military to leave. In the meantime, the Navy would resume bombing practice, using "inert" shells instead of live ammunition and reducing bombing to "only" 90 days a year. Meanwhile, Clinton promised to provide \$40 million in economic aid. There has been widespread public rejection of this deal in Puerto Rico, however.

"Judging from information I know, I don't agree with the bombing or the U.S. occupation," said Cynthia Paniagua, a 22-year-old Hunter College student in New York. "It's not just the bombing. Other things are being affected like marine life," she said, pointing out that fishing is a major part of the Vieques economy. As an advocate of Puerto Rican independence, Paniagua said, "I don't

want them there, period!"

Awilda Rodríguez, 23, another Puerto Rican activist in New York, stated, "What they have done in Vieques is similar to what they've done to all of Puerto Rico minus the bombs. This will open a lot of peoples' eyes. It used to be said that only *independentistas* fight against the Navy in Vieques, but now after seeing what the U.S. is capable of, many more have come out," said Rodríguez, who was raised in Puerto Rico. "Growing up, I heard many negative things about the U.S. government. Now I know they're true."

## U.S., Puerto Rican fighters call protests

"Mass mobilizations in important U.S. cities are key to denounce the arrests and to increase pressure against Navy plans for Vieques," read an e-mail letter sent out internationally by the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques.

Demonstrations have been called in Vieques and cities around Puerto Rico.

In Minneapolis, 50 people picketed in front of the Navy recruiting center. "Hey, hey! Ho, ho! U.S. Navy has got to go!" chanted pickets there. The protest was called by the Puerto Rican Coalition.

Protests have also been held in Boston and Tucson, Arizona, as well as other cities. Actions have been called in numerous U.S. cities, as well as in Toronto and in south Korea.

## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

### CALIFORNIA

#### Los Angeles

**U.S. Hands off Vieques. Independence for Puerto Rico.** Speakers: Ivan Camilli-Rivera, Puerto Rican Independence activist; Virginia Garza, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., May 12, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W. Pico (1.5 blocks west of Vermont.) Donation: \$5. Translation into Spanish. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

### ILLINOIS

#### Chicago

**Speakout Against U.S. Attacks on Vieques!** Fri., May 12, 7:00 p.m. 1223 N. Milwaukee Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (773) 342-1780.

### PENNSYLVANIA

#### Philadelphia

**The Economic and Land Crisis in Zimbabwe.** Sat., May 13, 7:30 p.m. 711 E. Passyunk Ave. (Two blocks below South and 5th streets.) Donation \$5/\$2 unemployed, students. Tel: (215) 627-1237.

### BRITAIN

#### London

**What the London Assembly Elections Show about the Class Struggle Today.** Fri., May 12, 7:00 p.m. 47, The Cut, London SE1 8LL. Donation: £2. Tel: 020-7928-7993

### CANADA

#### Toronto

**Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance—Crisis Deepens for Prospects for Stable Capitalist Rule in Canada.** Speaker: Christian Cornejo, member of United Food and Commercial Workers union. Fri., May 12, 7:30 p.m. 851 Bloor St. West. Donation: \$5. Tel: (416) 533-4324.

### NEW ZEALAND

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**Zimbabwe: The Hunger for Land.** Sat., May 13, 7:00 p.m. 129 Gloucester St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (3) 365-6055.

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Tel: (856) 697-0760

### May 8

10:00 a.m. at the United States Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, Washington DC  
Tel: (252) 826-2800  
or (252) 826-3244

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## 'CUBA IN TODAY'S WORLD'

Meetings in New Zealand for Cuban Consul General Maria Luisa Fernandez

Sponsored by Cuba Friendship Societies

### Auckland Wed., May 17

**1:00 p.m.** Auckland University, Arts 1 Building, Room 215 (Corner Symonds St and Grafton Rd)

**6:00 p.m.** Fund-raising dinner \$10.00.

**7:00 p.m.** Public Meeting, Rationalist House, 64 Symonds Street. Tel: (9) 525-5412 or (9) 373-7999 ext. 7917

### Hamilton Thurs., May 18

**Noon** Waikato University

Tel: (7) 856-2889

### Wellington Fri., May 19

**1:00 p.m.** Victoria University, Meeting Room 1, Student Union Building. Tel: (4) 384-8120

### Christchurch Mon. May 22

**3:00 p.m.** Canterbury University, Ilam Road.

**7:30 p.m.** Public Meeting, Trade Union Centre, 199 Armagh Street (1st Floor.) Tel: (3) 377-3934

Donations to help cover tour costs can be sent to NZ-Cuba Friendship Society, P.O. Box 6716, Auckland

## Support fighting farmers

Farmers are planning to "sound off" at field hearings conducted by the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture. Only farmers and ranchers will be permitted to testify.

### Boise, Idaho

May 12, 10 a.m., City Council Building, Lesbois Room.

### Peoria, Illinois

May 13, 8:30 a.m., Peoria Civic Center, Exhibit Hall B.

For directions or to listen to the sessions on the Web visit: [www.agriculture.house.gov](http://www.agriculture.house.gov)



# May Day marches target Ecuadoran 'dollarization'

Continued from front page

all the "dollarization" of the economy, which has been demanded by imperialist investors and domestic capitalists.

Big business hopes that reliance on the U.S. dollar will stabilize the economy and attract foreign capitalist investment. Substituting the dollar for the sucre, however, will tend to raise prices to international levels, well out of reach for the big majority of the population. In past decades working people fought for and won government subsidies for many food products and services that are now under attack.

Mahud was the second president driven from power in three years. In 1997, Abdalá Bucaram miscalculated by trying to ram through similarly drastic austerity measures. This sparked worker-peasant mobilizations of up to 2 million people that led the ruling class to quickly remove him from power.

On January 21, as insurgent Indian peasants and workers were joined by lower-level military officers in Quito, Mahud was briefly replaced by a junta that included Antonio Vargas, president of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE), and an army colonel. In Guayaquil, unions and other mass organizations formed a Popular Assembly that ruled for a few hours before the military took over. The military brass handed the presidency to Vice president Gustavo Noboa, who has since sought to drive through the dollarization and other "free market reforms."

## Rallies around the country

On May Day, marches were also held throughout the country. In the largest city, Guayaquil, 5,000 people marched. CONAIE president Vargas headed up the contingents of Indian organizations, which were accompanied by health-care workers and other union contingents. Also present were campaigners for the upcoming mayoral elections. Among these were supporters of Pachakutik, an indigenous political party, and of the People's Democratic Movement (MDP), an ultraleft group that prevented Vargas from speaking.

In Cuenca, the third-largest city, 6,000 people from 30 labor organizations and student groups marched through the streets. Demonstrators in the western cities of Manta and Portoviejo protested against the U.S. military bases. In Esmeraldas to the north-

west, 1,000 oil, electrical, and municipal workers including teachers condemned the government's economic policies. Similar marches took place in the northern provinces of Imbabura and Carchi, where many Black small farmers live.

The large presence of youth gave the May Day action here an especially enthusiastic spirit. Demonstrators used mock coffins, giant puppet figures, colorful caricatures, and youth on stilts to express their rejection of the government's dollarization measures as a solution to the economic crisis. The signs and props condemned the government for the latest increases in prices of transportation, food, and tuition, as real wages shrink.

One of the puppets showed George Washington holding dollar bills while chewing a big sucre coin, with an attached sign reading "And now we're going to learn English."

Among the most popular chants were "Dollarization no!" and "The people say it—they are right—we don't want the debt or dollarization!"

## Opposition to U.S. military base

Part of the demonstrators in Quito, led by the Coordinating Committee of Social Movements, the Patriotic Front, and other labor, student, community, and human rights organizations rallied and marched in front of the U.S. embassy to protest against the U.S. military base in Manta.

Some signs in Quechua read "*Llucshi caymanta gringos de Manta*" (Americans out of Manta). One of the chants repeated over and over throughout the march was, "We don't want to be a U.S. colony."

After burning some fake dollar bills, the marchers joined the rest of the demonstrators, who headed to the San Francisco square near the government palace where a platform was set up to hear speeches from a range of labor and Indian organizations.

High school and university students from various youth organizations danced, chanted, and waved colorful flags and homemade signs denouncing the government. The most prominent contingents included the Federation of High School Students of Ecuador (FESE), Federation of University Students of Ecuador (FEUE), Revolutionary Youth of Ecuador (JRE), human rights groups, and a group of anarchists with black T-shirts and flags called Action



A popular rebellion in Ecuador of Indians, workers, and peasants, sparked by drastic austerity measures, brought down the government on January 21. Above: soldiers step aside as Indians rush to occupy the Congress building in Quito that day. Increased confidence and combativity of working people was evident in May Day demonstrations throughout the country.

for Change. Many youth were not affiliated to any group. All of them, though, chanted at the top of their lungs against dollarization.

High school and university students in Quito, mostly from working-class and impoverished middle-class families, have been involved in protests against the recent hikes in transportation fares. The students have stood up to the police, who have assaulted them with tear gas and in some cases shooting live bullets, they reported. They have defended themselves by pelting the cops with rocks.

"The government is making it impossible for young people from low-income families to have an education," said Diego Valencia, 19, a first-year law student at the Central University. "Tuition is going up, and many just cannot go to school. We need a change, a change in this system."

Jorge Luis Reinoso, 22, a student at the Central Universidad and president of the FEUE in Quito, said of the May Day rally, "Workers, teachers, indigenous people, and students have demonstrated our unity. We all took part in the actions of January 21. Youth are in a more political and combative frame of mind. We believe that working people have the power to change history and to develop their history."

Many of the protesters expressed their opposition to the U.S. military base in Manta. This base has been operating fully since last year, according to Fabián Zurita, a leader of the National Federation of Peasant, Indian, and Black Organizations (FENOCIN). The base is projected to expand its airport to bring war planes.

Julián Arteaga, 23, a geology student, said the U.S. base in Manta "is there to dominate us and attack our brothers and sisters in Colombia," referring to Washington's growing intervention in that country under the guise of fighting so-called narco terrorism.

Another feisty group in the May Day march was a contingent of Blacks. They marched chanting "Down with the dollar"

and "Long live the Black peoples." Estuardo Delgado of the Afro-Ecuadoran Consciousness Movement explained, "We fight for democratic rights for Black people, both as a group and as individuals. Because there is racism against Blacks, we have to struggle for jobs both in public or private companies. Blacks constitute between 8 and 12 percent of the Ecuadoran population." His group is affiliated to FENOCIN, which in turn is part of the National Confederation of Blacks in Ecuador.

Freddy Congo, 21, leader of FENOCIN's youth section and also a Black farmer, grows tomatoes when he goes back to his region in Carchi province, north of Quito. He pointed out that Blacks in Ecuador are subject to racist discrimination. "Our organization has addressed this problem through protest actions and cultural activities. In the Chota Valley, north of Quito, we have made progress in Black people recognizing themselves and having others see them as Blacks." They must combat the racist prejudice that "Blacks are burglars or criminals," Congo said.

## Government austerity drive

Meanwhile, IMF officials met the previous week with President Gustavo Noboa to discuss a loan agreement. The "standby" loan of \$304 million would open other international loans totaling \$2 billion, provided the Ecuadoran government succeeds in implementing the austerity measures that have ignited the irate protests by working people.

These plans include increases in gasoline prices to 35,000 sucres a gallon (US\$1 = 25,000 sucres) and electrical rate hikes of 200 percent. Public transportation fares have more than doubled, and food prices have also skyrocketed. Inflation rose 89 percent over the last 12 months, and 49 percent the first four months of this year. An average family's "food basket" in March cost \$245, but the minimum income for a family of five was only \$113.

A delegation headed by finance minister Jorge Guzmán traveled to Washington May 1 to renegotiate the standby loan agreement with the IMF. By 1997 the debt was equal to 69 percent of the gross domestic product, and by 1999 it was up to 118 percent of the GDP.

Speaking at the rally, CONAIE leader Salvador Quishpe called for organizing a national strike, including labor unions, students, and indigenous and Black organizations, in the coming months to protest the austerity moves.

Many working people expect protests to flare up in June, when gasoline and domestic gas subsidies are to be ended.

# Unionists in Argentina protest cop assault

BY MANUEL GONZÁLEZ

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina—"They're doing the same to us that they did during the dictatorship, and this is supposed to be a democracy," unionist Guillermo Santibáñez angrily remarked.

Santibáñez, a public transportation worker, had participated in an April 19 labor protest by 500 workers that was brutally assaulted by the Buenos Aires police. The cops attacked demonstrators with rubber bullets, clubs, tear gas, and high-pressure water hoses, injuring 37. Most of the casualties were still in local public hospitals a day later for treatment and observation. Fourteen cops have been arrested as the government tries to dodge responsibility and minimize the political fallout from the assault.

The rally was one of a number of protests against antilabor legislation that has been pushed by the new administration of President Fernando de la Rúa.

After six weeks of controversy following the passage of the measure in the lower house of Congress on February 24, the Argentine Senate approved the bill April 26. The decision, which came one week after the police assault, was heartily welcomed by Wall Street.

The new law will gut industry-wide bargaining, which workers won through their battles to organize powerful industrial unions following World War II. It also allows employers to extend probation for new

employees and ends the automatic renewal of union contracts during protracted negotiations.

"This government has always said it had a plan to help workers, but after this police attack it is more obvious what kind of plan they really have for us," said Santibáñez. The demonstration he participated in was called by a breakaway wing of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), for decades the main trade union federation. The CGT split in March after the dominant wing of the officialdom caved in and supported the bill in face of government threats to take away the unions' control over dues.

"We are going to stay here all night to pressure the senators so they don't pass this law behind the backs of the people," said Hugo Moyano, head of the truckers union and of the dissident CGT, to the protesters. Earlier he had been inside the Senate demanding that the session be stopped. The legislators ignored his plea.

The incident used as a pretext for the police attack occurred when protesters refused to leave an area where a pile of trash had been set on fire. Government officials later reported that three Buenos Aires district attorneys had given the order to dislodge the protesters.

The cops beat, punched, and kicked protesters, using their rifle butts. News cameras recorded an assault by a cop who slashed the shirt of one of the protesters. By midday 49 unionists had been arrested and

released.

Outraged by the scenes of police repression they saw on television, hundreds of workers and students took to the streets to protest.

"We condemn completely the attacks and repression by the police and support the legitimate demands of the workers," said Sergio Fernández Novoa, a spokesperson for the Argentine Workers Federation (CTA), in an interview with the *Militant*. Leaders of both wings of the CGT also condemned the attacks.

In face of widespread public outrage over the police violence, Senate leaders decided to postpone debate on the antiunion legislation for a week.

Government officials were quick to distance themselves from the police attacks. Interior Minister Federico Storani called them "brutal and savage," but also claimed that the protest was "a deliberate attempt to impede the functioning of Congress" and therefore unlawful. The bourgeois press also ran antiunion television ads and editorials denigrating the protesting workers.

The De la Rúa government got off to a brutal start in December when it sent federal cops to crack down on a demonstration in the impoverished northern province of Corrientes where workers were demanding back pay owed to them for months. The cops killed two protesting workers. The repression has only deepened anger among broader numbers of workers.

## For further reading The Struggle for a Proletarian Party

James P. Cannon

In this companion to Trotsky's *In Defense of Marxism*, Cannon and other leaders of the Socialist Workers Party defend the centrality of proletarianization within the political and organizational principles of Marxism in a polemic against a petty-bourgeois current in the party. The debate unfolded as Washington prepared to drag U.S. working people into the slaughter of World War II. \$19.95

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 8.

# Build May 17 miners rally

Retired and working miners, relatives, and many other supporters of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) will rally in Washington on May 17. They will be in the streets to demand Congress make sure retired miners continue to receive lifetime health care.

Supporters of the *Militant* should leave no stone unturned in getting out the word on the miners' rally by distributing this paper in the coalfields, at coal mine portals and plant gates, in working-class communities, and on campuses.

The rally, whose demand is "Defend the Coal Act—Keep the Promise!" deserves the support of working people across the country. Holding it in the nation's capital is dead right because, in response to miners' struggles, the federal government has agreed since 1946 to ensure cradle-to-grave health benefits for miners.

The employers' press often distorts how miners won this "promise," pretending that their lifetime benefits were the benevolent work of President Harry Truman. The opposite is the case. These benefits were won through a mass mobilization of coal miners in the 1940s.

Some of the miners who will be marching at the May 17 rally were active union members and participants in the 1946 nationwide strike. The coal bosses, pushed to the wall by hundreds of thousands of coal miners, went crying to the federal government for help.

Truman seized the mines, sent in armed troops, and ordered miners back to work. But the unionists simply refused to return to work—until Truman agreed to support their demand for lifetime health benefits. The miners said: "You can't dig coal with bayonets." The "promise" was the result of steadfast coal miners engaged in class politics, not the "good" work of a liberal president.

Over the past two decades, coal companies that agreed to pay lifetime benefits have backed out of their obligation. Recent court decisions have backed them up. We should expect more attempts by the coal bosses to wiggle out, just as they have done by refusing to pay premiums into the Workers Comp Fund.

The coal barons and their minions in the courts and government are basically saying, "You miners are too damn old. We're sick and tired of paying your bills!" We are dealing here with two opposing class views and morals. Retired miners, other workers, and farmers should not be tossed aside once they are no longer producing profits for the bosses. The employers look at actuarial

tables of life expectancy, while workers look at elementary human solidarity.

We salute the veteran miners, some with 40-plus years of service, who today are retired. They know firsthand what conditions were like in the 1940s—a time when mining accidents led to an average of 1,120 fatalities and 50,300 injuries each year. A time when there was no federal government regulation of health and safety in the mines and medical facilities were inadequate.

The health card is a matter of pride. It directly affects coal miners' families, retired miners, and the coal mining community. How deep the question of health and safety is in the coalfields was brought home recently when 1,000 people commemorated the 100th anniversary of the mine explosion that killed 200 miners when the Pleasant Valley Coal Co.'s Winter Quarters mine exploded in Scofield, Utah.

Some nonunion miners have benefited from the UMWA's gains by getting a similar health plan. The majority, however, have few or no health benefits. Many of them are UMWA veterans and would jump at the chance to fight for the union. Miners and other workers—whether in the union or not—should pull out all stops to bring as many as possible to the May 17 rally.

The union has revitalized its alliance with the national Black Lung Association. The coal bosses are on a war footing to "squench" new Black Lung regulations, arguing that the new proposals are based on "bad science." Black Lung disease is still the main killer of coal miners, and the May 17 rally will be an added boost to the Black Lung fight.

The union is urging "all UMWA members—retired, laid-off, active and associate" to attend the rally. Buses are being organized throughout the coalfields. And the union is urging miners to "bring along anyone else who supports preserving our pensioners' health care."

The fight to maintain health benefits is connected to the broader question of the battles ahead in the coalfields and what has already shifted toward working-class moods of struggle. The tug-of-war between bosses and miners over whether coal will be mined union or nonunion will deepen as the operators keep pushing to increase hours, speed up production, cut corners on safety, slash Black Lung benefits to the bone, and gut health and safety benefits for all miners. It's a good time to join these struggles and spread the word. See you in Washington May 17!

# Cuba's sovereignty is the issue

Continued from Page 7

elsewhere throughout Asia be freed from Emperor Hirohito's boot?

The August 7 issue of the *Daily Worker*—the newspaper of the Communist Party USA, which supported the imperialist war—ran in full U.S. president Harry Truman's justification of the annihilation of the people of Hiroshima, and the next day proclaimed in a headline: "American labor contributed its share in creating Atombomb." After the assault on Nagasaki a few days later, the *Worker* featured a racist caricature of a Japanese soldier with two explosions blowing his brains out—one labeled "atomic bomb," the other "Soviet declaration of war," with the overall caption: "The old one-two."

That very same week, the *Militant* was emblazoned with the headline that told the truth about the course of U.S. imperialism over the next 55 years and counting: "There is no peace!"

## Unbending determination

Referring to the U.S. rulers' contemptible use of the Cuban child they hold hostage, Fidel Castro told the hundreds of thousands who turned out for May Day in Havana: "It is obvious that they underestimated our people, who have not rested a single day for something absolutely just."

Revolutionary-minded workers and farmers in the United States and the world over continue to salute the unbending determination of the Cuban people to resist U.S. imperialism's latest, five-month-long assault on their national sovereignty. In doing so, they have made it impossible for the U.S. government not to return Elián González to his homeland, sooner rather than later.

We continue to salute the dignity and firmness with which Cuba's communist leadership has conducted its dealings with the Clinton administration, making the concessions they deemed necessary to try to resolve the crisis while standing their ground on defense of Cuba's national rights. In doing so, they are acting in the traditions of Lenin and the Bolsheviks, who faced imperialist aggression from all sides against the young Soviet workers and peasants republic some 80 years ago.

In supporting unconditionally the right of the Cuban government to pursue its course in the difficult and unfinished negotiations with Washington over the return of Elián González, working people in the United States at the same time denounce every single demand the imperialist rulers of this country have placed on revolutionary Cuba and its citizens: the insolent INS trip to Cárdenas to determine Juan Miguel González's "fitness" as a father; the pressure on him to come to the United States, as he did in early April; and now the conditions under which the six-year-old and his family are still kept from returning to Cuba.

For the very same reasons, communists and other class-conscious working people in the United States are obligated to condemn in the most uncompromising terms the April 22 commando-style raid in Miami. Millions in the United States saw images of that operation on TV and in the newspapers and sensed—correctly—that comparable police assaults can, will, and *do* happen to many of them too, all the more so as the capitalist crisis and political polarization deepen worldwide. (As this issue goes to press, one such assault is under way right now on a small Puerto Rican island, as federal marshals, FBI agents, and U.S. marines remove protesters who have camped there for more than a year demanding a halt to use of Vieques as a practice area for U.S. military bombing and shell-ing.)

As last week's *Militant* editorial underlined, "if the only voice working people and worse-off layers of the middle classes hear speaking out against such indignities are those of reaction; if no angry and determined working-class voice is heard pointing a class-struggle way forward, then the radical siren song of fascist demagogues will gain an ever more receptive ear."

The rise in resistance by workers and farmers across the United States over the past few years, however, is creating new openings for the revolutionary workers movement to gain a hearing today. Together with the reverberations of the Cuban people's intransigence, this shift in U.S. politics is transforming politics in South Florida, pushing back rightist forces there, and sharpening divisions within the U.S. ruling class over Washington's unsuccessful four-decade-long effort to bring Cuba to its knees.

Normalize diplomatic relations with Cuba!

End the reactionary ban on trade and economic relations!

Send Elián González, with his family and friends, back home today!

## The Communist Manifesto

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

Founding document of the modern working-class movement, published in 1848. Explains why communism is derived not from preconceived principles but from facts and proletarian movements springing from the actual class struggle. \$3.95

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 8

# U.S. military get out of Vieques!

Continued from front page

U.S. Marines on three warships is also intended as a warning to anyone who dares stand up to the military might and prerogatives of the U.S. ruling families.

This assault on the people of Puerto Rico is the first political result of the commando-style raid the Clinton administration carried out April 22 in Miami. The final decision to launch the invasion force against Vieques was taken just days after U.S. attorney general Janet Reno ordered the raid on a home in Miami. Since then, the consensus has grown in U.S. ruling circles that the operation "worked"—that is, that they have won widespread public acceptance for this assault, which they will use to undermine the democratic rights of all working people.

The same state power and the same action, on a larger scale than Miami, was unleashed on Vieques. The U.S. rulers will push as far as they can to try to deal a blow to the struggle to get the U.S. Navy out of Vieques and to the independence movement. At the same time, they will continue to encounter widespread opposition among working people in Puerto Rico and, increasingly, in U.S. cities—especially those with Puerto Rican communities.

Washington's deployment of cops and troops to retake Vieques for their war training, in face of mass opposition among Puerto Ricans, shows the true face of U.S. colonial rule in this Latin American nation. With the typical arrogance of imperialist powers, the U.S. Navy brass describes Vieques as "our crown jewel." Since World War II, when they evicted fishermen, farmers, and workers from their homes and land, the U.S. military has used two-thirds

of the small island to carry out bombing practice and other military exercises and store ammunition, and the surrounding waters are used for military maneuvers—all with total disregard for the livelihood of the fishermen and other inhabitants of Vieques.

Since Washington seized Puerto Rico as a colony a century ago, the U.S. military has used all of this island as a springboard for military interventions to assert U.S. imperialist interests around the world, from the invasion of Grenada in 1983 and Panama in 1989 to war moves aimed at revolutionary Cuba. In fact, the April 1999 incident that detonated the current upsurge of protests against the U.S. Navy presence on Vieques was a U.S. warplane that dropped bombs and killed a local resident, David Sanes. The Navy was using Vieques to train pilots for the U.S. bombing campaign against the workers state in Yugoslavia.

Colonial rule means all the decisions affecting the people of Puerto Rico are made in Washington, not San Juan. It means the people of Puerto Rico are subjected to high unemployment, low wages, and a distorted economy that is designed to siphon profits to U.S. companies with little regard for Puerto Rico's economic and social development. It means stepped-up use of the FBI and other cop attacks on unions and the independence movement. It means six pro-independence political prisoners in U.S. jails today.

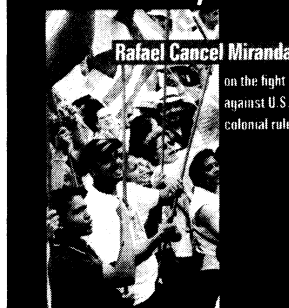
The independence of Puerto Rico is in the interests of the vast majority of the people of the United States. Working people in the United States and the Puerto Rican people face the same exploiters, whose headquarters is in Washington, D.C. A successful struggle for the complete sovereignty—*independence*—of Puerto Rico will deal a powerful blow to our common enemy. It will show it is possible to stand up to the most brutal capitalist class in the world and break its domination.

That is why the U.S. rulers are concerned about the spreading mood of resistance and anticolonial sentiments among Puerto Rican working people, seen most graphically today in the widespread movement to get the U.S. Navy out of Vieques. This combativity coincides with increased resistance by workers and farmers in the United States. Working people and youth in this country fighting for their unions or to defend their right to farm, as well as protesting police violence and other brutalities of the capitalist system, will be the most receptive to calls to oppose Washington's brutal moves against Vieques.

U.S. military out of Vieques! Protest the evictions! No more bombing!

Independence for Puerto Rico!

**Puerto Rico independence is a necessity**



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## Commend what cops do right

I usually try to stay out of disputes among and between organizations and people of the left, as long as we have some basis of agreement over the issues.

So it is with regret that I have come to the conclusion that this topic really must be addressed publicly. The *Militant* and some of its writers have really gone off the deep end in attacking the mission to rescue Elián González above and beyond the point that we all agree on: that if the INS and Clinton administration would have done what they should have in the first place (if there weren't an anti-Cuba policy in effect for the last 40 years) none of this would have become necessary. But it DID become necessary. And we ourselves could not have rescued that boy.

I take exception to the notion that what the *Militant* prints is automatically "the communist viewpoint." There is nothing "communist" about the confused stance taken by the *Militant* and Steve Clark in siding with the occupants of the "private home" where Elián was kept hostage for five months.

Clark objects to the comparison many have made to sending in troops to enforce integration in the South over the opposition of segregationist mayors and governors. Well, you don't need seven paragraphs of the history of the Civil Rights movement to understand where the similarities lie—just read your own words:

"How many more lynchings, beatings, floggings, and kidnappings must we have before the federal government acts to protect the Negro people of Mississippi?" Steve Clark recalls the grassroots movement of the '50s and '60s asking. Now, let's ask the same question after five months of the political kidnapping of Elián González: "How many more...kidnappings must we have before the federal government acts...[to take that little boy out of the hands of a group of crazed kidnappers and return him to his father, his family, his country]?"

Criticize all the many things that need to be criticized—but acknowledge that when they sent in troops to undo the horrendous mess they had gotten themselves into (which included bringing into total disrepute the one sector that gave them "cover" for their anti-Cuban policies), they were also saving the life of a little boy and reuniting a family.

The raid was neither "unconstitutional" nor "anti-working class"; it was simply the only way to rescue a small child being illegally held by a presumably armed group with a known terrorist record who had already stated publicly and privately that the only way they would give him up would be through the use of force.

There is no way that that should be equated with the brutal, inhuman actions that the *Migra* is prone to in its daily abuses of immigrants seeking work and a better standard of living that they hope to attain in the U.S. Just as you would not condemn the police force in a capitalist city for any number of proper actions they take on behalf of the citizenry—against murders and rapists, for instance—simply on the basis that at other times the police force acts in unacceptable ways. Criticize what they do

wrong, and commend what they do right.

I hope you will act like real communists, in analyzing what you have written until now, finding the errors in it, and printing a retraction.

Karen Lee Wald  
Havana, Cuba

## Reno's record in Florida

When the raid on the house first occurred, I remembered who Janet Reno is. She was the prosecuting attorney in Dade County for more than 15 years. During that time bombings, shootings, mob attacks on peaceful meetings and demonstrations, and other terrorism by the Cuban right wing were more common than today. Reno never carried a successful prosecution of any of them, not one.

I myself was beaten up by a right-wing Cuban youth at a meeting at Florida International University in 1992. The incident was recorded on several different video tapes and there were many witnesses. Reno's office intentionally sabotaged the case.

At the same time she was notorious for her equal inability to convict any of the county and city police who murdered innocent working people and was a big law and order supporter of the corrupt and violent local police.

This is why Clinton picked her as someone he could trust to lead the assault on civil liberties and the lives of working people by appointing her attorney general.

Tony Thomas  
Miami, Florida

## Defend democratic rights

The *Militant's* coverage of the INS spearheaded assault in Miami is exactly correct.

I think it should be pointed out that the democratic rights for which workers and farmers have struggled, in the United States and worldwide, are not just for the "innocent," as suggested by Laurence Tribe and other apologists for the naked rule of capital. Tribe wrote that the U.S. Constitution prevents the executive branch from "entering people's homes forcibly to remove innocent individuals...." This is simply false. The U.S. Constitution makes no such differentiation for seizing innocent as opposed to "noninnocent" individuals.

To the ruling class, no worker, no debt slave, no oppressed person anywhere in the world is "innocent" when she or he puts up a fight against the boss, the landlord, or their thugs (both the "legal" ones in police uniforms and the "extra-legal" ones). When workers organize and strike, the bosses call out the cops to protect the property rights of the "innocent" against the pickets.

The right to be secure in one's person against unreasonable search and seizure is not just for the "innocent." Every time the cops break into a worker's home, stop and frisk a person for being "suspicious," or pull a driver over for DWB ("Driving While Black"), the victim is presumed guilty by the cops and therefore not to be protected by the rights in place for the "innocent."

Democratic rights are among the most important tools we have to defend ourselves against the constant assaults by imperialism.

# Mushroom workers defend union



Militant/Nancy Cole

April 24 protest outside Vlasic Foods International mushroom farm in Blandon, Pennsylvania. Protesters supported workers inside who marched on management offices during their lunch hour, calling on the company to recognize United Mushroom and Agricultural Workers Union, formed this year. The workers, mostly Mexican immigrants, demand action on questions from wages to safety.

They are not "technicalities." The predawn cop assault was not for the protection of the innocent child and his right to go home. It was to make clear that the most violent ruling class in history is still in full command of its powers and to provide justification for further attacks on democratic rights.

Robin Maisel  
Los Angeles, California

## An immigration case

Just a note to thank you for the points in last week's *Militant* editorial about the phrase "Miami mafia." I had already become uncomfortable with that one, and the editorial finished it off. It also eliminated the wishful thinking that this was not an immigration case. Of course, in a better world, this would not be an immigration case because Elián was not an immigrant. But in the wicked world we live in, this was an immigration case.

The Cuban government set a 24-hour period of no criticism of the U.S. government—basically a period of silence—in response to Elián's return to his father. But the truce on the petty-bourgeois left has now lasted two weeks with no end in sight. No silence there.

Fred Feldman  
Newark, New Jersey

## Superb editorial

I had waiting for me on an e-group's site a letter Karen Wald sent from Cuba denouncing the *Militant's* article on the erroneous call for "federal troops to Miami." In case you hadn't also seen the forwarded message, in which Wald offers encouragement and advice to Attorney General Reno on how to conduct a raid, I'm attaching it for your information. [See next letter.]

The *Militant's* articles and editorial on the raid, in defense of the Cuban revolution, and all related issues are superb. They should be seen as a source of appreciative study by all those who seek political clarity and the most effective way to stand up to the imperialist regime, defend the Cuban revolution, and advance the interests of the working class. Thank you.

Jon Hillson  
Los Angeles, California

## Arrest everyone, including reporters

April 13, 2000  
Attorney General:

Our Constitution prohibits "cruel and unusual punishment." What you are doing to Juan Miguel and his family, and to Elián, is both cruel and unusual.

Over and over again, when you had the complete authority to go get that boy and return him to his father, you vacillated. Each delay has made things worse for everyone involved. You are letting that small group of Cuban-Americans who can see nothing but their hatred of Fidel Castro make a complete mockery of our laws and turn a little boy into a monster who may never be able to return to normal. You are keeping his father dangling from a rope as surely as

though you had hung him from a tree.

"Usual" would have been to return Elián—in November; in December; in January, and every day of this week. There was nothing to stop you, as you well know. "Cruel" is what you have done and are doing to his family.

The solution is really simple. As a journalist I've seen it done on dozens of occasions in various cities and states around the country: Send in officers to clear away the crowd, declaring it an illegal gathering and giving them five minutes to disperse; arresting those who fail to obey the law. Including all the reporters and cameras. Remove everyone from a five block radius. Go into that house and arrest Lázaro González and all of those who have been openly defying the law. Then quietly remove that child and take him back to where he belongs.

It is what almost everyone in the U.S. expects of you as Attorney General. All it takes is the courage to enforce the law. Please—now.

Sincerely,  
Karen Lee Wald

## Show more understanding

I think the *Militant* needs to show more understanding as to why many workers, especially Blacks and other oppressed minorities, as well as Cuba solidarity groups, would be confused and thereby celebrate Reno's INS raid of Lázaro González's home.

For years the right wing in the Cuban-American community has shown contempt for the democratic rights of anybody to discuss any issue concerning Cuba. Many have been subject to illegal and violent intimidation by Cuban counterrevolutionaries.

In these fights, we have to force the cops to defend our democratic rights. To those who don't take a moment to contemplate the implications for workers, Blacks, the undocumented immigrant workers, and solidarity activists, the situation can appear to be one of "bad guy versus bad guy." These things are not really based on thought or reason but on gut-level emotions that stem from anger and frustration.

There is something about the tone of the *Militant's* editorials that sounds like a condemnation of those who are confused by the capitalist media's anti-Cuban chauvinism. Even as I mentally understood the raid, for it was an attack on workers' rights, I myself couldn't help but feel elated at the humiliation of the gusano right wing. I knew that the police assault did not bode well for any of us. But your editorials had a tone of a broadside against your enemies, rather than a sensitive and understanding attempt to try and convince a friend.

Jeffrey Des Verney  
by e-mail

The letters column is an open forum for different viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

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## Zimbabwe workers discuss land seizures

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

HARARE, Zimbabwe—"If 20 years after independence, people have to pay high rents and cannot have 500 square meters of land, what did we fight for?" asks Albert Vingwe, the chairman of the Organization of Collective Cooperatives in Zimbabwe, who is himself a farmer and combat veteran of the liberation forces that fought a guerrilla war against the former Rhodesian white-minority regime.

The current occupation of farms, he says, "is a political issue. Land redistribution is not debatable. But one can't be happy with the way it's being done right now. It's a mixed grill, because now it includes thieves and thugs."

Views such as these are common in this southern African nation, which is undergoing a severe economic crisis, and where the two-decade-long political rule of President Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) has worn thin.

"Workers in urban areas, as well as their parents, brothers and sisters require land—as they have, with high expectations, since independence," said Isidore Zindoga, the acting secretary-general of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), in an interview in central Harare April 28. "Land redistribution is paramount to wealth creation for all. Of the 12.5 million people in Zimbabwe, those who have access to arable land with fertile soil are about 4,000. These commercial farmers control 60–80 percent of the arable, fertile land."

"The successive struggles of the people in this country have all been based on the land question," he said, since British colonizers recruited by Cecil Rhodes's South Africa Company invaded the area north of the Limpopo river in 1890, stole Africans' land and cattle, and went on to establish the white-minority Rhodesian regime, which was overthrown in 1980 with the triumph of the national liberation movement.

"Over six million people live in Zimbabwe's marginal rural lands without fertile soils and reliable rainfall, lacking control of water rights and restricted from access to the bulk of the nation's natural resources...(and) 4,500 mainly white, large-scale farmers today dominate Zimbabwe's largely agrarian economy," wrote Sam Moyo in *The Land Acquisition Process in Zimbabwe (1997/1998)*.

Many of these farms are massive. According to 1998 statistics, the largest 233 farms were more than 19,760 acres each. Anglo American Corporation alone owns 25 farms totaling 1.17 million acres.

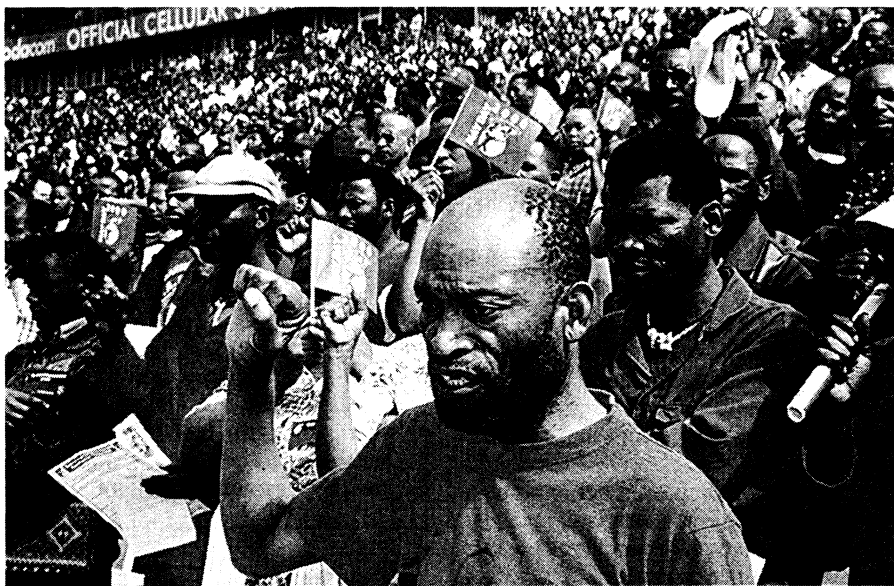
### Farm takeovers

According to the Commercial Farmers Union, which represents the predominately white capitalist landholders in Zimbabwe, as of April 27, 1,099 farms had been "invaded," and of these 669 were still occupied. Harare's *Standard* newspaper reported April 30 that 14 people had died in clashes since the occupations began.

The farm occupations started in late February, two weeks after Mugabe suffered a defeat in a referendum that would have expanded presidential powers and allowed the government to seize white-owned land without compensation, ostensibly for redistribution. The vote reflected growing popular dissatisfaction with the economic crisis and ZANU-PF rule.

Members of the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans Association, which represents a section of war veterans closest to the party, have led the majority of farm occupations with Mugabe's consent. Generally, a few representatives of the association, in combination with ZANU-PF officials and supporters, are responsible for organizing takeovers, which have included unemployed youth from urban townships and peasants from nearby villages. The war veterans group and ZANU-PF have organized bus trips from Harare for purposes of occupations, and many of those who participate receive a small sum of cash and

## May Day rally in S. Africa



Militant/T.J. Figueroa

Some 40,000 members of the Congress of South African Trade Unions attended a May Day rally at a stadium outside Soweto. At the event the trade union federation won support for its campaign against job losses in South Africa, which is set to culminate in a general strike May 10.

promises of land. To date little or no farming has begun in occupied areas.

Zindoga expressed the view that "the haphazard manner of redistribution through invasions will do more harm to the land than good. It would be better if it was planned."

The occupations have gone hand in hand with efforts by ZANU-PF to undermine growing support for the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which is winning the lion's share of growing political opposition to Mugabe's regime.

The MDC, closely aligned to the ZCTU, is led by Morgan Tsvangirai, outgoing secretary-general of the union federation. It has won support from capitalist interests in Zimbabwe, South Africa, the United States, and the United Kingdom, who are hoping that a post-Mugabe Zimbabwe will allow continued exploitation of the country's resources while keeping a lid on workers and peasant struggles.

There is growing support for the MDC, not only among workers in urban areas, but also in the countryside, including among farm workers. As a result, ZANU-PF supporters and war veterans have reportedly administered many beatings to rural working people to teach them a lesson during the occupations.

"Their intention is not to farm—it is to campaign for ZANU-PF," said Golden Magwaza, organizing secretary for the General Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union of Zimbabwe, which represents 100,000 farm workers. He said union organizers were being assaulted as they approached occupied farms, and the Zimbabwean government's Central Intelligence Organization was tapping union phone lines. "If the workers are displaced from the farms they will become squatters. Farm workers are fighting back because they are not sure of their livelihood. They have not been considered in the government's land reform program," he stated.

Not everyone agrees. Government-run newspapers say that white commercial farmers are instructing workers they employ to support the MDC and inciting workers against the veterans.

"Farm workers are in a quandary," said cooperative farms chairman Vingwe. "White farmers are clever. They tell the workers that they will lose their jobs and security if the farms are taken over."

Farm workers struck in 1997 and won a 40 percent wage increase. Bargaining with the employers resulted in increases of more than 30 percent in each of the subsequent two years. "But these do not keep up with rising inflation," said Magwaza. The average wage of the lowest paid farm workers

is Z\$1,150 (US\$30) a month. Many workers in manufacturing make about Z\$2,000 (\$52) a month.

### Imperialist oppression

Conditions for workers and peasants in Zimbabwe are light years away from those of the wealthy landholders. According to the World Bank, 1998 per capita gross national product in Zimbabwe was \$610. Some 63 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. The cities hold only 31 percent of the populace. Infant mortality is 55 per 1,000 live births. The country's debt to imperialist banks and governments is \$4.9 billion, and annual servicing of the debt was \$989 million in 1998. Approximately 200,000 people work as gold panners to survive. About half of the working-age population is jobless. Inflation is running at

about 50 percent and interest rates are between 56 percent and 70 percent.

The primary holders of the debt noose around Zimbabwe's neck are Washington, London, and other imperialist powers. Beginning in the early 1990s, the Mugabe government began implementing International Monetary Fund "structural adjustment facilities" that put the squeeze on the economy as a whole and working people in particular.

According to Zindoga, "the so-called deregulation of the economy as pursued by the IMF and World Bank has brought unemployment and poverty as a result of continuous hikes in basic commodity prices due to the removal of government subsidies, in particular on fuel, mealie-meal [ground maize—a staple food], milk, and bread."

The ZCTU represents about half of the working class employed in the "formal sector," which totals 1.2 million people, according to union spokesperson Nomore Sibanda.

In 1997 it organized the first successful general strike since 1948. The walkout and demonstrations protested a new tax imposed by the government to raise funds for remuneration to war veterans. Demonstrating workers were met with troops and cops firing tear gas and wielding riot batons, but the government reversed the levy.

### Ruling party's hold weakens

ZANU-PF, which during the liberation struggle drew political inspiration and material aid from the Chinese government, today says it is the defender of national sovereignty and the rights of black Zimbabweans. "Lest they forget, remind the sellouts and their paymasters that the power of freedom, dignity, human rights, and sovereignty gained from our heroic liberation struggle just 20 years ago is firmly in your proud Zimbabwean hands," said the text of a full-page ZANU-PF election advertisement printed in the April 27 *Financial Gazette*. "Don't throw away that power by surrendering it to unrepentant racial and foreign interests."

There are fewer people willing to accept the ruling party's militant-sounding rhetoric, however, under the blows of the eco-

Continued on page 4

## Workers in Norway reject contract; 80,000 walk out

BY CARL-ERIK ISACSSON

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—Some 80,000 workers in Norway set May 3 as the beginning of an indefinite nationwide strike. The decision follows the rejection by workers in the LO national union federation of a wage settlement negotiated with the employers federation.

Officials in most of the 18 unions involved in the contract negotiations had campaigned for a "yes" vote, but the 300,000 workers covered by the proposed agreement voted it down by more than 64 percent. Among hotel and transport workers, some 80 percent voted "no."

In the proposed three-year contract, the employers agreed to grant workers a fifth week of paid vacation starting in 2002, comprising one day already granted, another day next year, and the balance of three days the following year. They also proposed a wage increase of 0.75 krona an hour each year, with an additional 1.25 krona an hour for those with the lowest pay rates (1 krona=US 11 cents).

The agreement was unpopular on a number of counts. Workers insist on receiving the fifth week of vacation immediately. Many consider that the wage offer is low compared with what workers have won through strike action, especially the walkouts two years ago by transport and hospital workers. Unionists also favor a contract that runs for a shorter term than the proposed three years.

The strike involves, among others, 43,000

factory workers and 16,000 construction workers, organized in the same "Fellesforbundet" union; more than 6,000 food workers; 5,000 members of the chemical workers union; and around 2,500 members of both the hotel workers and transport workers unions.

The strike is expected to have a wide impact. Iron ore transports by train from the mines in northern Sweden to the Narvik harbor will be affected. As imports of auto parts produced in Norway for Swedish vehicle manufacturers dry up, production in Volvo, Saab, and Scania plants in Sweden could be crippled within a week or two.

These kinds of flow-on effects mean the confrontation contains the potential to escalate. Employers are likely to suspend workers as production comes to a standstill as a result of the strike.

The Norwegian government has extraordinary powers to settle strikes by compulsory arbitration, when they claim that threats to human life or the country's "vital interests" are involved. Workers in hospitals and the oil industry, who have been targeted many times by these laws, will not be part of the May 3 action.

As it became apparent that the strike would become a reality, the Norwegian krone hit a 15-year low against the U.S. dollar, as the central bank raised interest rates.

Carl-Erik Isacsson is a member of the metal workers union in Södertälje, Sweden.